

Vermont Climate Council July 26, 2021 -Minutes

Date/Time:	July 26, 2021, 8:30 AM
Location:	Zoom Meeting; meeting recorded and posted online
Physical Location to Attend in Person:	Agency of Natural Resources, One National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05602 in Catamount NL D215
Vermont Climate Council members:	Abbie Corse, Anson Tebbetts, Brian Gray, Catherine Dimitruk, Chad Farrell, Chris Company, Erica Bornemann, Iris Hsiang, Jared Duval, Johanna Miller, Joe Flynn, Julie Moore, June Tierney, Kelly Klein, Lauren Oates, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Lindsay Kurrle, Liz Miller, Richard Cowart, Sean Brown, Sue Minter, Susanne Young
Sub-committee co-chairs:	Billy Coster, Peter Walke, Sarah Philips
Staff and support:	Jane Lazorchak, David Plumb, Cameron Hager
Minutes By:	David Plumb, Cameron Hager

8:30 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Secretary Susanne Young, Agency of Administration

- Agenda Approved by Council

8:35 AM Review and Approval of [June 28, 2021 minutes](#)
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

- Minutes approved by Council

8:40 AM Just Transitions Reflection and Inspiration

- April Mendez, Green Print Partners
 - [Presentation](#)
 - Key points of discussion
 - Rural Resilience will want to reach out to April
 - Do you have examples of what happens when these community processes don't line up with the technical analysis?
 - Yes, however can still integrate community priorities and help educate around technical parameters.
 - How are larger policy frameworks and mandates important?

- The challenge has been having a mechanism to involve community-based organizations. Can be managed under a contractor.
- There are also non-financial supports such as providing childcare to help remove barriers
- If you focus on the barriers, you can shift them. It's happening in Seattle and other places right now
- How can a rural community without capacity be beneficiaries of these efforts?
 - There are circuit rider programs
 - Someone could be hired specifically to go into those lower capacity communities. They help articulate what those communities need

9:05 AM Introduction to Subcommittee draft pathways and strategies
Jane Lazorchak, Director, Global Warming Solutions Act

- [Presentation](#) by Jane Lazorchak on Subcommittee Pathways and Strategies

9:15 AM Subcommittee draft pathways and strategies
Subcommittee co-chairs

- [Rural Resilience](#)
 - Erica Bornemann and Catherine Dimitruk
 - Key points of discussion
 - Are you suggesting revisiting larger structural issues around role of state action versus local control?
 - Yes
 - How are we going to break out these meaty topics by 2025, 2030, 2035? Is there a more logical organization to these?
 - Yes, identifying short vs. long term
 - Cross sector mitigation would love to connect about reducing fossil use in municipal buildings
 - Vermont has brought up smart village growth strategy. Many of these have been developed in river corridors. How do you square these two things?
 - We've been having this conversation for 10 years. We have a good idea where infrastructure is vulnerable.
 - When it comes to local zoning, this is where the rub lies. Not sure how we move this to the next level.
 - Many downtowns were at the confluence of major

rivers. We need to move the conversation toward remediation and removal from high-risk areas, before another big event. We know more than we used to.

- We should think about affordable housing and make sure we include services for the unhoused population
 - The building/housing recommendations are great and lend themselves to cross cutting with the weatherization and electrification upgrades recommendations in the CSM committee
 - Without a prioritization process, how were "energy, communications, transportation, and water/wastewater" determined as the focus of the resilience-based pathway?
 - Will you incorporate the social infrastructure and other areas not identified in Pathway 2 for comprehensively assessing climate impacts? Also, how are we defining "climate impacts" (i.e. beyond hazard-based impacts, but including grid resilience, rural economy transformation, etc.)?
 - Is there an opportunity to bring in April from Green Pathways to this subcommittee to provide some GSI-based feedback/recommendations? Seems like there is much overlap between her presentation and RRA's work.
- [Agriculture & Ecosystems](#)
 - Billy Coster and Abbie Corse
 - Key points of discussion
 - Appreciation for acknowledging both natural and working landscapes. It's critical to achieving those goals laid out in the presentation
 - How do we incentivize small holders to keep trees for sequestration or do sustainable management?
 - Importance of maintaining local knowledge when looking at managing land. Need to focus on how to achieve these compact settlements so farmland (and farmers) is preserved. Path of least resistance is large development of land. Going to have address governance issues around this.
 - When mentioning "support and empower Vermont's farmers, foresters, land workers, etc...", please include regional planners.

10:30 AM BREAK

10:45 AM Subcommittee draft pathways and strategies continued

- Cross-Sector Mitigation
 - Presentation of draft pathways and strategies
 - Richard Cowart and Peter Walke

- [Electricity](#) Task Leads
 - Liz Miller and Ed McNamara
- [Building/Thermal](#) Task Leads
 - David Farnsworth and Christine Donovan
- [Non-Energy](#) Task Lead
 - Peter Walke
- [Transportation](#)
 - Johanna Miller and Gina Campoli
- [Cross-Cutting Issues](#)
- Key points of discussion
 - Question around Clean Heat Standard: What is the timeline on this? Could serve us extremely well.
 - Gives a lot of choice to the obliged entities
 - Technology (wood chip burners and heat pumps) very well known in Vermont
 - Biofuels companies are excited about this prospect
 - It has realistic short- and medium-term prospects
 - It would be really helpful to be able to say what we are doing and how well we are doing it, separating out enhancement vs. new strategies.
 - Particularly on weatherization. Do we have a clear picture of effectiveness? Answer: on average they achieve a 22% reduction (though the percentage of energy savings achieved varies by provider)ⁱ
 - Need to consider the regulatory framework that gives us confidence that these pathways will get us to the emissions reduction goal. A renewable energy standard and clean heat standard would help that.
 - Haven't been hearing about funding. Would like further clarity. Budgets are an expression of values.
 - We are currently not set up to reach frontline communities on these transportation changes
 - We need market signals to drive behavior change, and not count on one-time federal funding.
 - Buildings - weatherization at scale should be broadened to include building upgrades to support fuel switching and electrification. Weatherization without the others is not enough.
 - What potential strategies/actions are on the table with respect to building codes? Seems like an incredibly important/effective leverage tool to move the needle, while ensuring the codes are equitable across building types and income levels.

- Has energy use reduction (beyond efficiency, the actual reduction in how much energy we are using) been discussed as a value/goal/strategy within the various task groups in CSM?

12:10 PM Reflections on the draft pathways and strategies
Facilitated by David Plumb

- Three guiding questions:
 - *The Big Ideas: Thinking across the 3 subcommittees, what are key emerging issues? Which might require consolidation & coordinated work?*
 - *The Gaps: What might be missing (thinking high level)*
 - *The Conflicts: What pathways/strategies might be at cross-purposes?*
- No additional thoughts at time

12:15 PM Public comment (all comments compiled in public input database)

- Jeff Forward
- Annette Smith
- Ian Hitchcock
- Vanessa Rule
- Scot Zens
- Jennifer Ramstetter
- Jennifer Delony
- Steve Crowley
- Dan Reilly
- Virginia Clarke
- Matt Cota, VT Fuel
- Rob Lehmert

12:40 PM Next Steps for the Council and Subcommittees
Jane Lazorchak & Secretary Susanne Young

- Presentation by Jane Lazorchak on Next Steps and Time [Major Milestones](#)
- New Meeting Schedule
 - Agreed to bi-weekly meeting schedule starting September 13th and meetings Nov. 29 and Dec 1 but the day of regularly scheduled Council meetings was not agreed upon. Jane Lazorchak agreed to poll Councilors.

1:00 PM Adjourn

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ⁱ See page 26 here:

https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Pubs_Plans_Reports/Legislative_Reports/2021%20Annual%20Energy%20Report%20Final.pdf