

Vermont Climate Council
Nov. 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes
10am-12pm

Virtual Meeting Option to Attend via Zoom: All participants (Council members and observers) use the following Zoom link: Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83318536945?pwd=cNm5cZaw7OePvITOKa3Dh7FbEaV1ru.1>

Meeting ID: 833 1853 6945
Passcode: 739650

Climate Councilors present:

June Tierney
Eric Forand
Ryan Patch (for Secretary Anson Tebbetts)
Kelly Klein
Secretary Julie Moore
Jared Duval
Johanna Miller
Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux
Jaiel Pulskamp
Richard Cowart
Matt Cota
Melissa Bailey
Chris Company
David Deen
Michele Boomhower (for Secretary Joe Flynn)

- 10:00 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda/Approval of Minutes
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Councilors approved the previous meeting minutes.
- 10:05 AM Just Transition Reflection: Public Comment Approach for Council Meetings
Kelly Klein, Councilor and JT Subcommittee Co-Chair; and David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Councilors expressed support for adopting the approach for public comments, and will do so formally next meeting once the [document](#) is updated with the relevant language to include the Council.
- 10:20 AM Public engagement – Themes emerging from recent stakeholder and public

- Councilors spend a few minutes reading summaries, then offered the following reflections:
 - Many of the comments were cost-focused. There is a common theme about considering costs and asking how do we actually afford this?
 - Lots of requests for the state. Troubled by the disconnect between what people are asking for and what is actually feasible.
 - Concerned about the emphasis on thermal and emissions reductions and less emphasis on existential threats such as flooding.
 - The Council should seek data on how many people have been displaced from their homes, communities, and even the state due to the flooding. Should also include how many are anticipated to be displaced as a result of buyouts, inability to continue to subsist in damaged properties, afford rent as properties are brought into compliance with National Flood Insurance Program standards, and even fear/trauma.
 - Engage with communities facing these issues.
 - The Council should do a deep dive on common threads – themes and concerns
 - Confused by a comment about businesses seeking funding through municipalities. Not aware of that funding.
 - Several comments about needing better information-sharing and collaboration.
 - Is it that the information is not getting to the right people, or do the programs not exist?
 - The plan should ultimately include lived experiences in an attempt to humanize the Plan.
 - Concerned about representation of the full range of Vermonters in these input sessions.
 - Funding is critical to almost all transportation actions and the current sources are far from enough to meet the CAP's desired reductions in transportation emissions.
 - Current and future land use patterns have a direct effect on transportation choices and was not elevated as a theme in the document.
 - Several mentions of land access and cost of land. Economic viability for farming. As well as state support for farmers.
 - For private landowners, extending current use to include for keeping standing forests.
 - Resilience for people earning a living on working lands.

- Councilor comment: For the Buildings & Thermal sector, there should be some nexus between this element of the CAP and the Building Energy Code Working Group established by statute. The group's report to the legislature was just submitted and the group is authorized to continue work for another year.

11:00 AM Updates from Subcommittee Co-Chairs – The most challenging issues as they wrap up their work.

Subcommittee co-chairs (Cross-Sector, Rural Resilience & Adaptation, Agriculture & Ecosystems)

- Updates from Co-Chairs included:
 - Agriculture and Ecosystems:
 - Process would have benefitted from more priority setting by the Council at the beginning. Expecting Subcommittees to be able to establish priorities in a few months while digesting public input is a tall order. It should be the Council's job to identify what the priorities are and let Subcommittees flesh out the details.
 - The issue of wood fuel and biomass keeps coming up and we need direction from the Council if they are open to hearing recommendations on this or if the actions in the addendum of the plan are still valid.
 - Having all of the pathways, strategies, and actions sent to the public before input sessions would have been helpful because it is difficult to navigate to on the website.
 - Subcommittees struggling to decipher what different language means related to actions “progressing” or “no action taken.”
 - Rural Resilience and Adaptation
 - Struggling with capacity and changing composition.
 - Could use support in understanding the recommendations and statuses in order to make decisions.
 - Too much in the existing CAP. Council should think more about how to make this plan tangible.
 - Struggling to be pointed in our recommendations and to prioritize them in time for Dec 13 deadline.
 - How will the Council handle coordinating and organizing overlapping themes across Subcommittees?
 - Cross-Sector Mitigation:
 - Capacity is also an issue. Should update the guidance document to note that membership will involve more than four hours of work per week.
 - Need guidance on how the Council wants us to look at cost-effectiveness, in terms of balancing societal cost-effectiveness with affordability at the household level.

- Difficult to prioritize recommendations without having the modelling results from the greenhouse gas impacts of various policies under consideration. Worry we will miss the mark with our recommendations without this data point.
 - Struggling to identify funding sources.
 - Need high-level policy drivers that can adjust overtime for transportation and thermal, and need a set of complementary policies that deliver progress on key areas (i.e. EVs, low-income weatherization, heat pump installations, etc.)
- Councilors provided the following input to Subcommittee Co-Chairs:
 - On wood fuel and biomass, a priority action that should come out of the Subcommittee would be to find funding to do the additional studies required. The Council will need to prioritize that request, so the conversation that's needed is about where this ranks among the other priorities the Council wants to invest in.
 - Regarding the role of Subcommittees versus the Council, and how much priority-setting the Council should have done at the beginning, there is concern that if the Council were to give the Subcommittees priorities initially/ operate under a more top-down approach, we would end up accidentally reinforcing the status quo. But, should think about how to make this more of a back-and-forth process and have the Council weigh in more frequently on prioritization.
 - Think about how to engage with NGO partners on implementation, while assuring that they are not bringing policy directives generated by their constituencies.

11:50 PM Public Comment

- Zack Porter, Matthew LeFluer, and Annette Smith offered comments that included:
 - Concern with discussion about recommendations coming out of Subcommittees, specifically that there is pressure on/ filtering of what is coming out of Subcommittees to match what the Council has decided its direction should be. Seems contrary to the way this process should work. Subcommittees should make recommendations, elevate them to the Council, and the Council ultimately decides what to move forward with. Hopes Subcommittees can continue to think creatively, even if that means steering the Council down a different path.
 - Need to incorporate a budget plan / financial strategy into the Plan so people can see how much money we have on hand.
 - Would like to see affiliations added to participants in the input session summaries (i.e. Councilors, Subcommittee members,

government, and other organization associations) in order to know if we successfully reached the public.

- Wish the Quarterly Report had more detail about the conversations.
- Concern that a rural perspective is missing on the Council. Leadership should look to take into account geographic diversity when considering new appointments.

12:00 PM Adjourn ##

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