

Vermont Climate Council June 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: June 12, 2023 11:00 AM

Location: Virtual

Members Present:

Vermont Climate Council Members:

Bram Kleppner
David Deen
Jared Duval
Johanna Miller
Sec. Julie Moore
June Tierney
Kelly Klein
Kristin Clouser
Liz Miller
Michele Boomhower (in place of Secretary Flynn)
Paula Melton
Peter Sterling
Richard Cowart

Staff and Support:

Jane Lazorchak
David Plumb
Marian Wolz
Cameron Hager

Minutes Prepared by: Cameron Hager and David Plumb

- 11:00 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- 11:05 AM Review and Approval of April 24, 2023 minutes
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Minutes approved after fixing three typos
- 11:10 AM Just Transition Reflection
- Phoebes Potter, Environmental Justice Coordinator at the Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Unit of the Agency of Natural Resources, described the work of the unit. Phoebes invited Councilors to attend the next meeting of the [Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#), scheduled for July 18 12pm-4pm. In the discussion, Councilors spoke about the importance of individual Councilors reaching out to the Legislature to encourage more diverse appointments.
- 11:30 PM [Steering Committee Composition](#)
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Councilors unanimously approved the appointments of Kelly Klein, Jared Duval, Bram Kleppner and Liz Miller to the Steering Committee. Nine out of 13 current legislative appointees were present for the vote.
- 11:45 PM Life-Cycle Analysis and Rule-Making Notification
Julie Moore, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources
- Secretary Julie Moore updated the Council on the agency’s life-cycle analysis work and ANR’s intent to promulgate a life-cycle analysis rule.
- 12:00 PM Biomass Recommendations Next Steps
Councilors participating in the small group and David Plumb, CBI
- Councilors agreed with the approach of a small writing group tasked with incorporating Councilors’ concerns and making sure all Councilors have easy access to the inputs and deliberations of the Biomass Task Group. Councilors asked that this approach be written down and shared.
 - Liz Miller indicated she is happy to be a resource for the group, though she will not participate actively in it. The writing group may choose to tap other members of the Biomass Task Group as well.
- 12:20 PM [Legislative Summary](#)
Julie Moore, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources

- Councilors reviewed a summary of legislative outcomes for the 2023 session with ties to the Initial Climate Action Plan.

12:30 PM [Climate Action Office Updates](#) – Highlighting Links to Council Priorities
Jane Lazorchak, Climate Action Officer

- Councilors received an update on the work of the Climate Action Office and how it connects with Council priorities and implementation of the Initial Climate Action Plan, including a tracking and measuring progress tool, technical studies underway and a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency planning grant.
- Councilor questions included:
 - How might Vermont’s existing Initial Climate Action Plan – structure, format, content – need to be adapted to meet the requirements of the EPA? (Jane’s answer – Vermont’s plan already has the components. The U.S. EPA puts particular focus on areas such as workforce and equity.)
 - Will federal implementation funds be available for municipalities and NGOs? (Jane’s answer – municipalities yes, NGOs no.)
 - Will the Council have a chance to review the Priority Climate Action Plan that the state is preparing this year? (Jane’s answer – yes)
 - Is there an opportunity to learn more from other states with this work? (Jane’s answer - Yes, the EPA process brings states together. And all New England states plus Rhode Island and Connecticut are proactively talking.)

1:10 PM Public Comment

- Annette Smith and Pike Porter spoke. Key points of their comments included:
 - Concern that more Councilors are involved in the Agriculture and Ecosystem Subcommittee. It feels unbalanced now.
 - Would like the biomass councilor writing group to have open meetings. If not, please provide notes. Concerned about how long the process might take and the windows into the process for the public.
 - Please make all Councilor comments around biomass public.
 - Biomass emissions are not carbon-neutral, but local decisions are already being made that suggest that. Please go back to the documents, such as the pathways analysis, to correct that.

1:20 PM Final reflections and next steps
Councilors and Jane Lazorchak

- The date of the September Council meeting will be set shortly.

1:25 PM Adjourn

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