

**Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee  
of the Vermont Climate Council  
6/14/24 Meeting - Minutes**

Location: Meeting was recorded and posted [online](#) here.  
Subcommittee Members present: Andrea Wright, David Deen, Alice Peal, Marian Wolz, Val Stori, Eric Forand, Scott McCormick, Bronwyn Cooke, Ann Lawless, Allie Webster, Candace Pearson  
State Agency Staff Present: Ben Rose, Anne Margolis, Jared Ulmer, Carloine Paske, Otis Ellms-Munroe  
Minutes by: Sue Plant

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- 9:02 AM Welcome – Andrea Wright, RRA Co-Chair  
Agenda Overview  
  
Introduction of new JT Liaisons - Danielle Bombardier and Anna Guenther  
  
Approval of [May 10, 2024](#) Minutes- David Dean made a motion to approve, Alice Peal Seconded the motion, Motion carried
- 9:14 AM VCC/SC Updates – Andrea Wright, RRA Co-Chair  
More information and registration for the 6/18 meeting at 5:30pm:  
<https://climatechange.vermont.gov/cap-kick-off-june18>  
and the 6/20 12:30pm event: <https://climatechange.vermont.gov/event/vermonts-climate-action-plan-2025-update-kick>
- Shared the Climate Action Office 2024 Engagement Calendar and quarterly outreach newsletter (see [resource page](#))
- Marian mentioned the focus groups around the state and said they'd be looking for subcommittees like this one to help guide them on the types of questions to be asking. Be thinking about a set of questions we can share with that team to help facilitate their meetings, and the results will come back to the committee.
- 9:21 AM Final [Work Plan](#) Review – Alice Peal  
Described the work in two phases - planning and drafting. Noted the Plan will be fluid within phases and that we are at the gaps identification milestone. Will look at recommendations from other organizations and subcommittees.
- 9:32 AM Pathways and Strategies Grounding – Marian Wolz

Marian and several others that were involved in the drafting of the Initial CAP provided an overview of the Pathways and Strategies.

Ben Rose – Commented on the fact that some schools that were flooded should not be rebuilt in the floodplain, and the agency of Education is not on the list of folks adding input. There may be an analysis on education that feeds into our planning and could be identified in our work over the next 5 years.

Bronwyn Cooke – Regarding the housing crisis, it's not the Climate Council's responsibility to solve the problem but to think about how its policies impact different sectors of housing development. Between Federal and State requirements they are driving up the cost of housing. Need to look at how the policies are affecting housing for vulnerable and low-income families.

Caroline Paske – With Pathway 2 - it would be helpful during the gap analysis to keep the Dam Safety office involved because dams are not mentioned in the Climate Action Plan currently.

10:10 AM

Gap Identification – Survey review – Andrea Wright

Reviewed the survey results, looking at where the focus should be, pathways that need to be expanded, etc. There was an even distribution on where to focus - individual, communities, built and natural environment. Public health, rural economic, and preparedness and recovery were sectors noted as needing greater representation. Financing was noted as the greatest needed support but planning and justice and equity were also noted as a theme to focus actions on.

There is a need to narrow down priorities and look at what AG and ECO and CSM subcommittees are doing and align with those. Need to have a facilitated exercise to look at crossovers in the pathways and strategies.

10:30 AM

Approach to carry out the work – Marian Wolz

<https://www.menti.com/alfuoq5zoy96>

Reviewed the building of the Climate Action Plan. Task groups were formed on the pathways based on the charge of the Global Warming Solutions Act. Small groups worked together and brought it back to the Committee.

Discussed how small groups should be formed for efficiency.

Discussion ensued about what subgroups may need to be formed: housing and what needs to be put in place at a policy level; public health, resilience planning under pathway 1, municipal capacity (housing), and a broad infrastructure group were noted.

In the end the group decided on public health, community capacity and planning, and infrastructure and the built environment as subgroups. Members will need to decide which subgroup they'd like to participate in.

Adjourned 11:10 AM

In chat:

Alice Peal shared article regarding rebuilding a mobile home park in a flooded area: <https://vtdigger.org/2024/06/13/officials-alarmed-by-apparent-rebuilding-of-manufactured-home-park-in-floodplain/>

Candace Pearson- - curious how much “managed retreat” is incorporated here? or progress on that

Ben Rose - Good question, Candace. We are prioritizing the buy-out of flood-prone structures in the allocation of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding from last summer's flood (up to \$80-90M available, and the legislature has provided non-federal match from ARPA fund reallocation). Hinges on willing property owners and willing municipalities. BTW, the national literature on message testing says "don't call it 'managed retreat'!"

Val Stori - Clarifying question on Pathway 5—is this more about access to affordable housing and land use/zoning or about the resilience of affordable housing?

Ben Rose - I think the emphasis or "spin" on it for Vermont is "reconnecting rivers to their floodplains" and "protecting the meander belts of rivers and streams"

Alice Peal - Yes, here in Waitsfield we are working on all 3. Also not really highlighted yet is our non existent storm water infrastructure.

David, I agree with you. The Housing needs will be addressed in the Regional Plans. We would reference the Climate considerations and the continued flooding risk.

Val Stori - Clarifying question on Pathway 5—is this more about access to affordable housing and land use/zoning or about the resilience of affordable housing?

If it's meant to be both, I think "electrified" and "energy resilient" is missing from the pathway—some people won't be able to leave their homes in extended power outages (for various reasons)

Anne Margolis - Seems like public health is potentially a lens through which all the other sectors can be viewed/organized

Val Stori - I think it would be OK to have overlap among task groups, that way we're more likely to address gaps. My suggestion: Buildings/Finance access, including incentives/Health/critical infrastructure-resilience hu

Anne Margolis - or those interested in the topic of building codes, see Act 151 passed this year which created a Building Energy Code Working Group. Part of its charge is to "consider whether or not the State should adopt a statewide building code."

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/ACTS/ACT151/ACT151%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

Caroline Paske - Nothing moves forward without local capacity!

Candace Pearson - public health; infrastructure and built environment; community resilience

Caroline Paske - Public health, Infrastructure, Housing/Homes? though environment and agriculture might be missing still