

Vermont Climate Council September 14, 2021 -Minutes

Date/Time:	September 14, 2021, 1:30 PM
Location:	Zoom Meeting; meeting was 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 present:	Abbie Corse, Anson Tebbetts, Brian Gray, Bram Kleppner, Catherine Dimitruk, Chad Farrell, Chris Company, Erica Bornemann, Iris Hsiang, Jared Duval, Johanna Miller, Joe Flynn, Julie Moore, June Tierney, Kelly Klein, Kiah Morris, Lauren Oates, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Lindsay Kurrle, Liz Miller, Richard Cowart, Sean Brown, Sue Minter, Susanne Young
Sub-committee co-chairs present:	Billy Coster, Peter Walke
Staff and support present:	Jane Lazorchak, Marian Wolz, David Plumb, Cameron Hager

Minutes By: David Plumb, Cameron Hager

****NOTE:** Comments from Zoom Chat can be seen at the bottom of this document

- 1:30 PM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Secretary Susanne Young, Agency of Administration
- Welcome new Council member Bram Kleppner
 - Agenda Approved by Council
- 1:35 PM Review and Approval of [Aug 23, 2021 minutes](#)
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute
- Minutes approved by Council
- 1:40 PM Just Transitions Principles
- Specific action needed by the Council:** 1) Adopt formally the Justice Transitions Guiding Principles and Scoring Rubric.
Sue Minter and Iris Hsiang
- Sue Minter and Iris Hsiang gave an overview of the [memo](#) that was sent out to council addressing concerns expressed in the previous meeting

about the Guiding Principles and Scoring Rubric

- Key Takeaways from Council discussion:
 - Full Council agreed to adopt the JT Principle and Rubric, with the explicit understanding that the Principles and Rubric don't demand zero negative impacts, but rather are a tool to understand them.
 - Some councilors expressed concern about whether there is sufficient time and capacity to do justice to this work prior to Dec. 1.
 - In addition, some councilors noted that applying the principles is equally important to the next phases of implementation, legislation and budgeting.

1:50 PM Guidance for Sub-Committees – Plan to support consistent analysis and prioritization as sub-committees develop/refine their Pathways, Strategies and Actions

Jane Lazorchak, Director of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)

- Jane Lazorchak presented the [draft Prioritization Framework for the Climate Action Plan](#).
- Key Takeaways from the discussion
 - Council members expressed support for the general framework and asked for the following revisions.
 - “Ready for implementation” –
 - Feels too binary and is an inappropriate step – eliminate it
 - Instead, look at all the actions against the criteria, and let prioritization occur that way
 - Then, create an implementation schedule.
 - This will also allow the plan to highlight high-impact actions that maybe aren't ready for immediate implementation (but could include some short-term first steps and identification of initial resources needed)
 - For mitigation actions, potentially could frame them as ready to implement for 2025 and 2030.
 - “Less is more?”
 - Good for clarity and focusing attention
 - However, what is presented must add up to meeting our statutory requirements
 - And comprehensive climate action may take a lot of action.
 - Change Terminology of “Pathways” to “Goals”?
 - For mitigation, “goals” is problematic language and pathways is better.
 - When we present pathways, we should probably lead with the most impactful
 - Definitions of the 5 criteria:

- Technical feasibility
 - Probably should keep this focused on what is technically feasible, however, let Science and Data sub-committee work on this more, and look at IPCC definition.
 - GWSA has language that ties feasibility and cost effectiveness together. Do a scrub of the statute.
 - Science and data should consider whether we're really trying to have a yes/no, and if so, we need to narrow this. Or we have a high, medium, low approach.
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Include what it saves as well as what it costs. We externalize so many costs, and defer so many costs to future generations. We've got to own the full cost of the status quo
 - Define holistically – not just to consumer, but to the state, including program implementation, rate payers etc., future generations etc.
 - Should speak to the changing playing field that will happen over the coming years.
 - Co-benefits
 - Add other co-benefits as well – health impacts, job creation & economic development, for example
- Other Questions Discussed
 - Question regarding expectation for subcommittee presentations later this month
 - For this month's presentation, the Council is looking for full lists of Pathways/Strategies/Actions, but doesn't expect the equity and prioritization analysis yet.

3:10 PM BREAK

3:20 PM Process for Drafting and Reviewing the Climate Action Plan text
Jane Lazorchak

Specific action needed by the Council: Review and approve a proposed process, including drafting and reviewing text, to consolidate sub-committee outputs into the Initial Climate Action Plan.

- Jane Lazorchak presented the [proposal](#)
- Councilors expressed support for the approach, and made several suggestions for improvements, including:
 - Ensure we have transparency in the revision process, so people can see how their comments were incorporated, or not. For instance,

offer documents with track change. In addition, we will archive drafts with tracked changes.

- Put specific names of lead authors in the assignments document
 - Let subcommittees decide who – might not be the co-chair
- Where in this outline will the Council describe costs and where is money coming from?
- Might we be able to show how our recommendations fit in with regional, national and global action?
- A cross-cutting issue: for items assuming some level of government action/planning/reporting, where are things likely to happen in practice? In the past, good policy has been pushed off to levels of government that can't/won't do it.
- Overall, how are we discussing enabling conditions and where will those conversations happen? For instance, around an environmental justice policy for the state.
- The plan should describe our process as a Council
- Section 10 is missing from the timeline
- Section titled “Implementation” feels like it has the wrong title. Perhaps better: Supporting framework for implementation.
- Next steps
 - Councilors should contact Jane by the of week if they would like be part of the cross-cutting group. Probably will be 8+ hours of work per week.
 - The steering committee can flesh out details around the cross-cutting group

4:05 PM Science and Data Subcommittee Recommendations – GHG Accounting and update on Social Cost of Carbon Next Steps

Subcommittee co-chair and Councilor Jared Duval

Specific action needed by the Council: Review and signal level of support for sub-committee recommendations around GHG Accounting.

- Subcommittee co-chair Jared Duval presented the [GHG accounting recommendations](#). Cost of carbon next steps were not discussed.
- Key Takeaways from the discussion
 - Councilors expressed preliminary support for the approach but will wait to give final approval until concerns from Ag and Ecosystem have been addressed.
 - No objection was raised to move forward right away on the proposal to solicit a Request for Information for additional technical support

- Ag and Ecosystems has concerns about the current approach to accounting for the agricultural sector and will connect with Science and Data to address the concerns.
- Members expressed concerns about the process for making decisions on the Council.
 - The Council would like to see concrete proposals in front of them, and clarity on the decisions they are being asked to make.
 - The Council needs to understand if it will be making using the consensus-building process used to date or motions and voting on items. If a combination of the two, clarity needs to be provided on when the Council moves from consensus to voting or if we move forward with one or the other.

4::40 PM Updates

Jane Lazorchak, Director of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)

- The council has 3 three consecutive meetings coming up
- [Public Engagement Schedule for September](#) is available online and Councilors are encouraged to join as observers

4:45 PM Public comment

Two members of the public spoke. Details of their comments are available in [the recording](#).

- George Gross
- Annette Smith

4:50 PM Next Steps and adjourn

- Meeting Adjourned