

Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council September 17, 2021 Meeting - Minutes

- Date/Time: September 3, 2021 8:30 AM
- Location: Meeting was hosted virtually on Zoom with a physical location at the ANR offices in Montpelier. Meeting was recorded and [posted online](#).
- Subcommittee Members Present: Abbie Corse, Billy Coster, Alissa White, Ryan Patch, John Roberts, Charlie Hancock, Iris Hsiang, Jake Claro, Judy Dow, David Mears
- State Staff Members Present: Marian Wolz, Jane Lazorchak, Ali Kosiba, Marli Rupe, Bob Popp, Pat Field (CBI)
- 8:35 AM Greeting, Review, and Approval of the [Agenda](#) and [9/10/21 Minutes](#)
- Agenda and minutes were approved
- 8:40 AM [Sharing and Discussion of Stakeholder Meeting Comments from this week](#) - Pat Field and Subcommittee Members in attendance at the 9/14 Meeting
- Subcommittee discussed key takeaways they had gotten from the meeting and contradictions they heard in the different suggestions received.
- 8:55 AM Update on VCC Steering Committee potential guidance on Prioritization and Equity Screen and Reminder of SC Decision Rules – Jane Lazorchak
- Climate Action Plan Outline currently under development – will assign different topics to Task Leads for drafting. Staff support will similarly be assigned and will coordinate with Task Leads to assist with drafting as needed/desired.
 - Spreadsheet (Matrix) to share with full Vermont Climate Council requested for 9/21 meeting, discussion ensued over timeline, approach to prioritization of actions, and timing and guidance for Equity matrix. Jane shared that direct and clear guidance to assist with Prioritization and Equity will be available shortly.
- 9:15 AM Pat Field introduced recap of Consensus, and what happens according to the VCC guidelines if Subcommittee doesn't reach Consensus.
- According to VCC guidelines, if consensus cannot be reached there is a process for deciding what to share with VCC, which involves the Council members on the Subcommittee voting on an approach to take. Several Subcommittee members expressed concern over this, and a preference for a consensus-based approach. Subcommittee discussed possibility of addressing concerns that are in the minority by sharing the concerns in written form alongside the recommendations.
- 9:30 AM Final Review of [SC recommendation to VCC on net emissions accounting](#)

- Subcommittee re-read recommendation in written form. After extended discussions on the implications of the recommendation, Subcommittee came to consensus and agreed to send this recommendation to full VCC.

- 10:00 AM Review of Spreadsheet “[What’s Missing](#)”
- Subcommittee discussed concerns, challenges and opportunities in solar installation on farms.
 - Subcommittee flagged importance of climate-supportive workforce development as a cross-cutting issue
- 10:20 AM Break
- 10:25 AM Public Comment #1
- Public comments were received by Jennifer Ramstetter, Cheryl Joy Lipton, Zack Porter and John Brabant.
- 10:35 AM Review of Spreadsheet “What’s Missing” & [Disagreements](#) (continued)
- Several Subcommittee members agreed that in general recommending research and development would be a good approach for short term actions that would support the longer-term goals.
 - Subcommittee discussed complexity around feed additives and buffer establishment and suggested some language changes.
 - Importance of addressing development and subdivisions was discussed. Subcommittee intends to collaborate with Rural Resilience on this topic.
 - Biomass was discussed, with concerns noted around the efficiency of energy generation from biomass. Charlie intends to work on some re-writes that will clarify the intent of these recommendations.
 - Carbon offsets were discussed at length, particularly concerns around the accounting of these offsets inside and outside of the state, how these offsets would or would not interact with required reductions from other sectors, and financing mechanisms for these projects.
- 11:35 AM Discuss planning for next meeting. **2hr meeting scheduled from 8-10am Wednesday, 9/22/2021.**
- Judson and Marli will clean up recommendations as a result of this discussion, consulting co-chairs with questions or concerns they are unable to address. Abbie & Billy will review document prior to posting late Thursday evening (9/23). This document will then be reviewed in Friday’s 9/24 meeting.
 - Friday 9/24/2021, Subcommittee will develop a plan for a presentation to share with the VCC on Tuesday 9/28. Slides will likely be drafted by Billy and Abbie.
- 11:55 AM Public Comment #2
- Public comments were received by Jennifer Ramstetter and Zack Porter.
- 12:00 AM Meeting Adjourned