

Cross-Sector Mitigation Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council
12:00 PM September 7th, 2022
Minutes

Location:	Meeting was recorded and posted online here
Subcommittee Members Present:	TJ Poor, Bram Kleppner, Johanna Miller, Jared Duval, Liz Miller, Christine Donovan, Adam Sherman, Gina Campoli, Kelly Klein, Chris Campany, Megan O'Toole, Andrea Wright,
State Agency Staff Present:	Jane Lazorchek, Marian Wolz, Collin Smythe, Brian Woods, Brian Sewell, Kenneth Jones; Deirdra Ritzer, Ryan Patch
Minutes by:	Bram Kleppner

Alice Peal, Annette Smith, Cheryl Joy

12:00 PM Welcome / Opening Remarks

- Review of agenda
- Agenda amended to introduce youth member candidate later in meeting.
- Administrative change noted: committee members are going to rotate taking minutes.

12:03 PM Minutes of previous meeting approved without comment.

12:04 PM Budget discussion

- TJ Poor explained that for the Council to have input into the Governor's budget process, we should make recommendations prior to the October meeting.

12:05 PM

- Transportation Working Group budget needs reported by Joey Miller and surfaced during discussion:
 - Administrative support & facilitation
 - Need for dollars to support analysis of economy-wide measures. Note that some of this is now happening through the Carbon Reduction Strategy.
 - Budget for public outreach.
 - Budget for data collection and analysis.
- Jane Lazorchak reported that there is \$200,000 available for facilitation for Council and Subcommittees, and also that a community engagement and communications coordinator is a new position in the new climate action office. Jane will send out the structure of the Climate Office structure when it's developed.
- Discussion about how much of the data the Council will need is going to be collected by ANR, and whether the Council and ANR will need better state-wide data to make good recommendations.

- Discussion about the fact that Vermont continues to experience rural sprawl, contrary to the goal of compact settlements. Land use regulations allow for this, and we could counter that with incentives to build and buy or rent housing in compact settlements.

12:25 PM

- Christine Donovan reported the thermal sector budget priorities:
 - Working on the clean heat standard made clear the need for greater stakeholder engagement and public outreach, specifically information about what the clean heat standard is and what it would do.
 - Need to better understand heating needs and how various heating technologies would work.

12:28 PM

- Liz Miller reported that the Biomass Working Group feels that it is premature to identify specific resource needs beyond community engagement regarding biomass in general and specifically the way the communities in the regions of biomass generation experience that proximity and the impacts that they have had. That is going through the Just Transitions budget asks.

12:30PM

- Public comment: none on the above topics.
- Discussion of whether subcommittee members willing and able to pick up those pieces of administration that ANR will no longer be doing.
- Components of support that will continue:
 - Compliance w/ open meeting law: posting/sharing minutes online,
 - General administrative support w/ respect to onboarding
 - Developing and creating agendas has been collaboration between ANR and the chairs – the chairs are going to take most of that on, although there will be an ANR person on each subcommittee.
 - Measuring and tracking progress will need to be iterative w/ the Climate Office.
 - Climate office will support creating meeting schedules, setting up zoom, etc. Climate Office will expand zoom account to Climate Council so that Jane and Marian don't have to be at every meeting. Megan will be our person.
 - CAP adopted Dec 1, now moving into implementation. Plan wasn't complete – need to address the gaps. The GWSA says that formal update/second plan has to be delivered by July 1st, 2025. If we are moving into implementation, where is the support for the planning work for the second iteration going to come from?
 - When subcommittee members need help on work that's beyond their bandwidth, support from the Climate Office will be available.
 - If subcommittee sets some priority that's not a Climate Office priority, it might not make sense to use Climate Office resources for that.

12:45 PM

- Richard Cowan noted that Jane has been part of all the subcommittees and has fulfilled the very important function of letting each group know what all the others are doing, and

suggested that if no one is going to pick up that function, we should submit a budget request to hire someone to fill that role.

12:49 PM

- Thermal Sector Task Group has a strong RFP written. The task group met yesterday, discussion about centering the Clean Heat Standard in the RFP, and timeline for deliverables, aiming to have finished product for beginning of the next session, which seems unlikely.
- Goal is to reach consensus with the task group. Cross Sector may need to meet again this month to review before the RFP gets posted.
- Working to structure the RFP to address the issues that the Governor raised in his veto message on the Clean Heat Standard.
- RFP will call for looking at the Clean Heat Standard compared to other options and combinations of complementary policies.
- Suggestion that we make the RFP available to the committee members and the public for feedback.

12:56 PM

- Recommendation and decision to make the next meeting of the Thermal Sector Work Group public, and invite CSM members to participate, to give everyone an opportunity to provide input to the RFP.

12:59 PM

- Discussion of the importance of the legislature passing a replacement for TCI-P and the Clean Heat Standard in the 2023 session, given the three-year development and implementation timeline, which would put us into implementation in 2026, which gives very little time to make the legally required greenhouse gas reductions by 2030.
- No public comment offered.

1:02 PM

- Transportation sector memo presented to CSM – what to replace TCI-P with?
- VTrans is now working on the Carbon Reduction Strategy (“CRS”) per the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”). This work is focused on optimizing current programs for greenhouse gasses and equity.
- It is on a different timeline from the timeline the Council is on per the GWSA.
- Memo points out that we need to choose something, and need ongoing work right now.
- VTrans CRS will be central to what we do. Suggestion that VTrans and maybe the consultant presents to full subcommittee, as the CRS may be the underpinning of the Transportation Work Group’s work going forward.
- Subcommittee as a whole would benefit from being more involved in the substance of the work that the work groups are working on.
- Re. the Transportation memo:

- The memo states that there are only two ways to reach our goal (cap/trade/reduce/invest, or a performance standard). Discussion of whether being that categorical will cause problems as it goes forward.
- Subcommittee agreed to add language “currently known” regarding the viable options, and “likely to be” in front of “cost-effective”.

1:25 PM

Public comment:

Cheryl Joy:

- We should look at reducing miles traveled overall – need better land-use regulation to encourage concentrated settlement and reducing rural sprawl.
- Need more discussion on public transportation.
- Freight trains constantly running throughout Vermont and switching that to electric and adding passenger cars. Lines used to be passenger rails, for example, Bellows Falls to Rutland. Easy fix. Not just one daily in each direction – need more.
- Pushback against the Clean Heat Standard will get worse if we go forward with biomass as a source of electricity.

Response from TJ: there is a rail plan in the Energy Plan, to increase ridership. For instance, increasing the quality of lines so speed of passenger rail will be faster. Also large sections on land use planning and reductions of vehicle miles traveled.

1:30 PM

Biomass task group, reported on by Adam Sherman

- Newly formed drafting group created to find some consensus recommendations to bring forward to CSM.
- That group has worked to refine the scope and figure out where to pick up the Ag & Eco recommendations that were tabled.
- Have had a few months of presenters on burning wood for electricity.
- Looking at how to make it pay to keep woods as woods.
- Lifecycle analysis has not been completed, and it will be helpful when it does.
- Biomass Task Group is slated for the October Council meeting to present recommendations. Likely to bring recommendations about electricity, further recommendations likely to about how to keep learning.
- A task group subgroup is trying to bring some conclusions to the task group.
- Task Group meeting will be noticed in the usual way.

1:36 PM

Public comment:

Cheryl Joy: All presenters at the Biomass Task Group have been one-sided, skewed, in favor of status quo, in favor of continuing to burn wood for electricity. Hopefully the task group will keep an open mind at next week’s meeting, when a different point of view will be presented.

1:40 PM

Introduction of the new youth member of the CSM subcommittee: Stella Fox, junior at Colchester High School.

1:43 PM Next Steps and Adjourn

Meeting of the full Climate Council is Monday, Sept 12, 2022, at noon.

1:46 PM Meeting adjourned.

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