

**Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee
of the Vermont Climate Council
8/20/24 Meeting - Minutes**

Location: Meeting was recorded and posted [online](#) here.
Subcommittee Members present: Andrea Wright, David Deen, Ann Lawless, Dahlia Cohn, Jason Schafer, Alice Peal, Marian Wolz, Dr. Mark Levine, Scott McCormick, Candace Pearson, Bronwyn Cooke
State Agency Staff Present: Anne Margolis, Ben Rose, Caroline Paske for Stephanie Smith, Otis Ellms-Munroe
Minutes by: Sue Plant

12:04 PM Welcome – Andrea Wright, RRA Co-Chair
Agenda Overview

Approval of [July 12, 2024](#) Minutes – Andrea provided time for review and then asked if anyone had any modifications or corrections needed. No one did. Andrea asked if Minutes should be considered approved and members indicated they should be approved.

12:10 PM VCC / Subcommittee Membership Updates
Subcommittee Membership changes – David Deen has stepped down from the Co-Chair position, Allie Webster (Member with expertise in the design and implementation of programs to increase rural resilience and response to disasters resulting from climate change) and Paula Melton (Member representing Municipal Government) are also stepping down from the council and thus the subcommittee. Those seats will need to be filled by the legislature. Suggestions for filling the seats may be presented to the Speaker of the House or the Committee on Committees.

New quarterly report is [posted](#); encourage members to review.

Invitation to participate in upcoming outreach:

The Climate Action Office, via e-mail from Liz Amler invited subcommittee members to participate in engagement efforts led by the Climate Action Office. Interested members should reach out to Liz or Sophie.

- o All Brains Belong Community Health Education Fair, Statehouse Lawn, Montpelier: Saturday, August 24th, 11 am – 3 pm
- o Tentative Vermont First African Landing Day, The Intervale, Burlington: Saturday, August 24th, 11 am – 6 pm

SharePoint sites: Climate Action Office has a SharePoint site for document organization, where you will also find task group documents for shared document editing. Andrea will learn more and share back.

[SC meeting 8/19/2024](#): Shared the following documents of interest:

- 12:20 PM Task Group Lead Guidance (Alice, Val, Scott and Marian)
Task Group Leads met with Marian to discuss a framework to carry out the work. Alice gave an overview of the meeting. Marian provided an overview of the document generated to serve as the framework. This has since been further modified for use by all subcommittees – see link above for document discussed at SC meeting.
- 12:30 PM Task Groups Update
- Building and Infrastructure Group - Alice Peal, Ben Rose, Dr. Levine, Jared Ulmer
Met and discussed priorities and concerns, where we're at in public health and where we need to go. Identified heat, air quality, water quality, water borne viruses, mental health services, as areas to focus on. Had an additional discussion (Alice Peal and Jared Ulmer) about communication with people in rural areas, unhoused people, etc... Big concerns are how to reach folks to let them know what is happening. (Grants, River Scientists to explain river flooding)
- Community Capacity and Planning – Scott McCormick, Marian Wolz, Caroline Paske, Bronwyn Cooke, Otis Ellms-Munroe, Dahlia Cohn
Met 3 times to date, started with identifying the strategies, looked at the actions and decided whether they needed revision or needed to go to another task group. Designed the task group scope and updated a spreadsheet with notes and directions.
- Infrastructure and Building Environment – Val Story, Andrea Wright, Michael Burke, Anne Margolis, Candance Pearson. Had one scheduled meeting but only Andrea and Val were able to attend. Summer scheduling has been challenging but input provided via shared document and e-mail. Made recommendations on which task groups would take each one. Input provided to Marian and Otis for consolidation.
- The overall breakdown of strategies and actions based on input from all Task Groups was shared.
[Task Group Strategy Comparison & PPT Summary](#)
- Discussed Pathway 3 Strategies and Actions for reduction of fuel use in rural areas and the overlap with Cross Sector Mitigation.
Bronwyn Cooke voiced concerns about the implementation and roles getting multiple things done at once. Such as building codes, focused on fuel sources, efficiency, etc., addressing issues in tandem with each other. Cross sector mitigation perspective, and resilience mitigation, could use more time to review actions in different sectors.
Scott McCormick spoke about Pathway 5 affordable housing and didn't see the climate change impacts to a lot of the actions. Need to look at the connectivity between affordable housing and

climate change resilience and adaptation. For example, the rental registry, how did it get in the climate action plan? Where is the link to climate change and adaptation?

Marian Wolz voiced concern about the scope “siloing” as we could miss things. Wondered if the Steering Committee discussed crosscutting issues at their meeting? Andrea Wright said they did not discuss this at the meeting, but will address it at their next meeting.

1:15 PM Public Comment – none

Alice Peal mentioned that there might be conflicting goals in the state and municipalities concerning affordable housing. Building sites proposed encroach on wetlands, and where to build is conflicting. Will be interesting to see where the Climate Action Plan falls on these issues.

Scott McCormick said it’s important to look at how you build. Determine what construction is used. Look at climate-smart buildings, electrify instead of gas. How do you instruct builders, give the legal framework to do that. Pathway 5, give the DRB the codes on how to build.

1:20 PM Recap and Next Steps

Next meeting will be the second week of September, a date to be determined. Specific actions for any task group will be addressed at the next meeting. By the end of the September, we need to have proposed strategies and actions. At the next meeting talk to other task groups about common actions to divvy up work, so we can move to the next step. There are a number of questions under Step 2 in Guidance. Look at revisions needed, and the task group should identify who they need to hear from to make modifications. Andrea will send e-mail to Task Leads to clarify task group assignments. Scott felt his task group should meet before the next meeting to revise or drop items from the actions and strategies. Pathway 3 – Andrea will reach out to CSM and be prepared for further discussion at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 1:32 PM