

**Vermont Climate Council
November 16, 2021 - Minutes**

Date/Time:	November 16, 2021, 1:00 PM
Location:	Zoom Meeting; recording 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, Bram Kleppner, Brian Gray, Chris Cochran, Chris Company, Catherine Dimitruk, Erica Bornemann, Iris Hsiang, Jared Duval, Johanna Miller, Julie Moore, June Tierney, Kelly Klein, Kristin Clouser, Lauren Oates, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Liz Miller, Richard Cowart, Sean Brown, Sue Minter
Sub-committee co-chairs present:	Peter Walke, Gina Campoli, Sarah Phillips
Staff and support:	Jane Lazorchak, David Plumb, Marian Wolz
Minutes By:	David Plumb

1:00 PM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

Agenda was approved by the Council.

1:05 Review and Approval of November 9 and November 10 Minutes

Minutes were approved

1:10 AM Just Transition Reflection – Implementation of Equity in the CAP
Councilor and Co-Chair Sue Minter and Co-Chair Sarah Phillips

Sue Minter and Sarah Phillips described the section of the Initial Climate Action Plan that speaks to implementation of equity and just transition principles going forward. Councilors offered no suggested changes to the text.

1:30 PM Cross-Cutting Pathways proposed pathways, strategies and actions
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

David Plumb facilitated a conversation around concerns that councilors raised about the Cross-Cutting Pathways proposed pathways, strategies and actions. Key points of discussion are recorded below:

Compact Settlement

- Overall, the document should be careful around key words and phrases that can trigger different meanings and concerns for different readers.
- For instance, the recommendation calling for a state land use plan can be reworded to avoid triggering historical baggage, with an emphasis on the need for study and engagement around it, and an emphasis on state planning action rather a static state zoning map.
- Chris Campany and Chris Cochran will revise the text to address concerns around the level of effort needed to address planning gaps in the state around compact settlement
- Peter Walke offered to help “scrub” the text to ensure it accurately reflects current programs and efforts overseen by DEC.
- Some text might be better located in the Rural Resilience recommendations, in particular lines 73-75 on the design of drinking water systems.
- A concern was raised that some actions feel too detailed and not at a similar altitude to the rest of the CAP. However, other councilors urged that the actions stay in because they are practical, implementable next steps.
- Line 171, clarify the recommendation is referring to removing barriers to clustered developed in compact areas.
- The document can make a more explicit mention around the data gaps around these land use issues and the importance of addressing them.
- The recommendation to create an Office of Strategic Investment and Coordination needs to be revisited in light of the council’s discussion around the recommendation of a state climate change office/director (see below).
- Concerns were raised about the recommended action (Line 203) to pilot a land value taxation study. Any study would need to address these concerns, and consider equity consequences and potential unintended consequences on development patterns.

Personal Action

- Jared Duvel expressed an openness to working with other councilors to incorporate more actions related to resilience and adaptation, and also adding language that signals this section is primarily focused around emissions reductions in this version of the CAP. Just Transitions subcommittee also agree to review the section for equity considerations.

State Capacity

- Councilors spent significant time discussing the proposal to "create a climate director position in the executive branch.”
 - Councilors agreed that a signal person is insufficient and the wrong model
 - Councilors agreed to take the different versions of this idea emerging from the Sub Committees and consolidate them into a signal proposal that focuses on:
 - Coordination across the administration, breaking through silos, and having an equitable lens to this work
 - Building capacity in different areas of government to work on these issues

- Bringing partner organizations to the table and building their capacity
 - Councilors had different views on whether a new structure needed to be created, or whether existing structures offered the appropriate platform for this. For some, this recommendation feels like setting the conditions to continue the work of the council.
 - Councilors agreed to review a revised, consolidated proposal
- A suggestion was made to include increasing translation and interpretation capacity in state government as a key recommendation in this section (the idea is already in the Just Transition Implementation section)

3:30 PM Transportation proposed pathways, strategies and actions

David Plumb, CBI

Councilors discussed concerns around the Transportation pathways, strategies and actions. Key points from the conversation were:

Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) Program

- Most of the council's discussion focused on this issue
- Two main viewpoints emerged in the conversation:
 - For many councilors, TCI Program is a crucial part of the overall package of measures and this CAP should unequivocally support it, calling on state government to immediately begin rule-making towards it while the legislature does its part to determine how the state will invest the resources the program will generate.
 - Other councilors said the CAP should signal the legislature must act first to determine the use of resources before rulemaking begins. These councilors said this sequence of actions would allow the public to have a clearer view of the overall program prior to the agency finalizing the details and giving a final sign-off. This sequencing would allow state government officials to feel more comfortable supporting TCI, according to those councilors.
 - In the discussion, councilors expressed concern that the push for this sequencing would dilute the clarity of message about TCI being an integral part of the CAP and its ability to meet the emissions reduction goals. These councilors were concerned about expressing conditional support.
 - Councilors expressed a willingness to look at revised language and explore potential solutions. Commissioner Walke agreed to take the lead with Secretary Moore to propose suggested language.
- The discussion around TCI promoted questions about whether the Council is making recommendations or whether the CAP can compel rulemaking. Councilors reviewed the text of the Global Warming Solutions Act but did not reach a common view on this point. A suggestion was made to ask for legal advice on the issue.

Other transportation issues

- On the financial impact of EV charging rates, one councilor noted that adding an additional amount of cost to charging rates to supplement lost revenue from gas taxes

doesn't appear to be a viable option at this time. Relatedly, a suggestion was made to call for transparency in public charging rates.

- Regarding concerns around the Local Carbon Fuel Standard, a task lead said this recommendation did not make the cut of the priority recommendations.
- Access to transportation was suggested as a missing piece. Sue Minter will send some suggested edits to include it.
- Regarding the suggestion of fare-free transit, one councilor noted that the recommendation is useless unless a new funding mechanism would also be proposed.

4:45 PM Discussion on Key Sections of CAP

David Plumb, CBI

Councilors were offered the opportunity to comment on four sections of the CAP that were shared ahead of the meeting: Public Engagement Section, Economic Context and Opportunities Section, Funding Section and Measuring and Assessing Progress Section. Comments included:

- On equity – whenever the documents refer equity and future engagement, it needs to emphasize that we must go to where people are, not expect they will come to us.
- Because public engagement has been so important, include it in the headline. And emphasize reaching out to key stakeholders who haven't been sufficiently part of the conversation yet.
- We should probably flag the Infrastructure Bill that just passed in the funding section.
- Energy and context lines 93-100: appreciate the sentiment, but the rate of change, particularly around buildings, may not be consistent with the rate of change needed. Review language around this.

5:15 PM Methodology for Nov. 23 and Nov. 29 Meetings

David Plumb, CBI

David described a proposed plan for Council decision-making in the coming 2 weeks, in particular how the Council's decision-making protocol will be implemented in a more structured way. Councilors agreed to the plan, and noted that one option that Councilors could use to overcome impasses is to agree to table the specific issue for this version of the CAP.

5:30 PM Public comment

The following individuals made public comment:

- Matt Cota
- Jordan Giaconia
- Pat Sagui

5:55 PM Next Steps and adjourn

The Council will meet on Nov 17, Nov 23, Nov 29 and Dec 1 as it works to finalize the Initial CAP.