

**Vermont Climate Council
November 29, 2021 -Minutes**

Date/Time:	November 29, 2021, 8:30 AM
Location:	Zoom Meeting recorded and posted online
Vermont Climate Council members present:	Abbie Corse, Anson Tebbetts, Bram Kleppner, Brian Gray, Catherine Dimitruk, Chad Farrell, Chris Cochran, 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, Billy Coster
Staff and support:	Jane Lazorchak, David Plumb, Marian Wolz, Cameron Hager
Minutes Prepared by:	Cameron Hager and David Plumb

8:30 AM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

Agenda was approved by the Council.

8:35 AM Review and Approval of [Nov. 23 minutes](#)
David Plumb, CBI

Minutes were approved by the Council.

8:40 AM Just Transition Reflection: Lead an exercise to recall an aspect of equity work that you want to keep front and center
David Plumb, CBI

The Council approved an approach for addressing a land recognition in the Climate Action Plan. The Dec.1 version of the CAP will include a place to put this acknowledgement, and a statement that the council will be working together in the coming months to develop one. David Plumb led a Just Transition exercise for the Council.

8:55 AM Decision-making conversation: Adaptation and Building Resilience in Natural and Working Lands
David Plumb, CBI

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around Adaptation and Building Resilience in Natural and Working Lands, picking up from the previous week's conversation on this topic. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

- On the **Use Value Appraisal Program**, to address the concerns from some Councilors that this is a delicate issue that require careful consideration, an overwhelming majority of councilors (19-1) agreed to alter the language so that the recommendation began with, “Recommend amending the Use Value Appraisal program to allow for...”.
- On the **FHARC around line 673**, the Council unanimously revised the language so that it reads, “Adopt legislation authorizing ANR to revise the Flood Hazard Area & River Corridor (FHARC) rule to incorporate statewide jurisdiction and permitting authority for river corridors for all kinds of development”.
- On **Pathway 5**, several councilors had concerns regarding the language and tone as it relates to renewable energy. The Council agreed unanimously to edits shown on the screen which included:
 - Adding “like other land development” in the intro and the middle of the following paragraph
 - Mentioning municipalities throughout the section
 - Removed the word “negative” preceding the word impact
 - Adding the phrase “if alternate sites are reasonably available.”
 - Remove the word “penalize”
- **On the “No-Net Loss” policy**, the Council agreed to take this issue back up and consider alternatives. Two alternatives were offered by councilors. First, a suggestion was made to change the word “policy” to “goal.” Second, a suggestion was made to change the wording to “Examine the implications and consider establishing a state policy...” The Council did not show a clear preference in the initial voting. In a subsequent vote that asked councilors to choose one or the other, the majority of the councilors (12-8) voted to change the language to “Examine the implications and consider establishing a state policy of...”.

10:55 AM BREAK

11:10 AM Decision-making conversation: Mitigation in Agriculture
David Plumb, CBI

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around Mitigation in Agriculture. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

- There was a concern on how mitigation strategies include both gross and net reduction strategies. The council agreed to add the following footnote:
 - Note: the methodology for the Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory is currently conducted on a gross emissions basis. Sequestration strategies would not apply to a gross emissions accounting and, at this point, would only apply in the net accounting approach of the carbon budget, relative to the 2050 net zero target established in the GWSA. Whether and how sequestration can or will be counted as a mitigation measure in the official VT GHG Inventory is the subject of an RFP process, as agreed to on X date and referenced here...

11:40 AM Decision-making conversation: Sequestration and Storing Carbon
David Plumb, CBI

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around Sequestration and Storing Carbon. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

- **Biomass recommendation - Strategy 17:** The Council members noted that the Sub-Committee did not reach a consensus recommendation on this issue. Councilors also said they needed more time to thoughtfully address the different aspects of this issue. Therefore, councilors unanimously agreed to:
 - “Table” this issue for further work by the full council and through a joint effort of the Cross-Sector Mitigation and Ag & Eco subcommittees.
 - The issue will be called out in the Implementation Section of the CAP, as an issue the Council seeks to do more work on, “with an aim to provide resolved language in Spring 2022, recognizing that the Council may require additional time to thoughtfully engage on this issue.” The text will direct readers to the sub-committee’s most recent drafts to see the work done so far and the suggestions on the table.
- On **Strategy 8**, Action a, the Council agreed to add the following clause to the second sentence: “and by siting solar in areas that retain some agricultural use, such as grazing, or in locations that do not meaningfully diminish the agricultural viability of a farm.”
- This section will be cross-referenced with mitigation where the strategy and actions are repeated (and vice-versa).

12:15 PM Public Comment

The following individuals made public comment:

- Zack Porter

12:20 PM LUNCH BREAK

12:45 PM Decision-making conversation: Cross-cutting pathways
David Plumb, CBI

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around Cross-Cutting Pathways. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

- In **Strategy 2**, a majority of councilors (15-4) agreed to adopt language shown on the screen that removed references to a “State Land Use Plan” but instead referred to a “statewide land use planning policy and implementation plan”.
- On **Strategy 3**, a majority of councilors agreed to table this strategy and include it in the Implementation section of the CAP that speaks to issues for which the Council needs more time to work.
- On **Line 584**, the Council agreed unanimously to include the phrase “with specific

investment in and capacity built for community outreach, translation, and language access”.

- On the **Workforce Development** section, there were concerns that this section felt incomplete and not nearly as robust as it needed to be. The Council agreed to the following changes:
 - Add in the Implementation Section a mention that these recommendations need additional work
 - Include additional language in the text of this section that “The actions below are examples of steps that can be taken...” and an invitation for other stakeholders to work urgently toward addressed a predicted workforce shortage.
- The Council discussed **the Education section recommendation around language used by state agencies and the history of eugenics**. One councilor suggested alternative language. After significant discussion, all councilors agreed to move forward with the original language as the base, together with modifications to the actions so that they speak to the need for: 1) education and learning about the history of the words and why they are offensive and 2) training for state agencies to help make necessary changes in language. Councilors Iris Hsiang and Julie Moore offered to work with Subcommittee member Judy Dow to finalize language by Tuesday morning.

2:35 PM BREAK

2:50 PM Decision-making conversation: Transportation Pathways for Mitigation
David Plumb, CBI

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around Transportation Pathways developed in the Cross-Sector Mitigation Sub-Committee. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

- On **page 23 regarding the Fare Free/Sustainable Transportation plan**, there was a concern that there was no replacement revenue. Councilors agreed to the suggestion of adding the phrase “and identify funding to replace these fares”.
- On **Legislative action and rule-making**, Councilors confirmed that all recommendations that will result in new action by an agency should include mention of the need for funding and personnel.
- Regarding **the vehicle efficiency price adjustment recommendation**, there was a concern that the agencies do not have the authority to authorize such an implementation. Councilors agreed to ensure the language speaks to the need for legislation. In addition, the same clarification should be made in the transportation section (in addition to the Implementation Section).
- On **ARPA dollars**, there was a concern that wording didn’t recognize that AOT has an existing prioritization process it has developed with the legislature over the years. Councilors agreed to mention that prioritization process in the text.
- There was a concern from some councilors that the **medium and heavy-duty electrification** recommendations may be sending the wrong signal to the current workforce. The council agreed to revise the text and use plain English language to explain the intent and functioning of the proposed rule in Pathway 2, Strategy 1.

- The Council discussed the revised **TCI-P** recommendations. Councilors adapted the text further to add a timeline for suggesting initial steps to address the possibility that TCI-P may fail as a regional marketplace, as well as measures to implement in the meantime if uncertainty persists around TCI-P. Councilors agreed to aim for a timeline of Spring 2022 for this initial ideas. Some councilors suggested the recommendation should not ask the legislature to take up TCI-P legislation. However, a majority of the council (14-7) voted to keep the language intact.

4:15 PM Public Comment

The following individuals made public comment verbally or in the chat:

- Cheryl Joy Lipton
- Annette Smith
- Christine Donovan

4:25 PM Decision-making conversation: Buildings & Thermal Pathways for Mitigation, Electricity Pathways for Mitigation, and Other Non-Energy Emission Pathways for Mitigation *David Plumb, CBI*

David Plumb facilitated a conversation on decision making around the remaining components of the Cross-Sector Mitigation recommendations. Key points of the conversation are recorded below:

Buildings and Thermal

- More emphasis on “**rural**”: Councilors agreed to add specific reference to rural residents in:
 - The first paragraph
 - Pathway 2, strategy 1, clean heat standard (line 232-238) “for example rural residents”
- **Align language with GWSA:** Councilors agreed to change references to GWSA targets and goals to “requirements”
- **Clean heat standard:** Councilors agreed to:
 - Add more explanatory text to shine a light on the equity considerations, and the impact on fossil fuel costs over time.
 - Task leads agreed to make new suggested text by Tuesday morning and test with interested councilors, specifically around line 232.
 - Timeline to implement the rule-making. Councilors agreed to revise the time length to “no longer than 18-24 months”
 - Some councilors asked for assistance in explaining the implications of this recommendations to others.
 - Subcommittee and task leads expressed willingness to help everyone explain this fully with details.

- Pathway 2, Strategy 2. Councilors agreed to make explicit that legislation would be needed for the Department of Public Service to act.

Electricity sector

- Numbers need to be updated in the table as they don't match with introduction section of the CAP

Non-Energy Emissions

- Pathway 1, Strategy 1, Action b: Councilors agreed to shift the order of the language to be consistent with Action a, i.e., the analysis should come first.
- Pathway 3, Strategy 1, Action a: Councilors agreed to provide more context in the equity analysis section to explain why costs are mentioned there.

5:15 PM Next Steps and comments on other sections of the Initial CAP

Jane Lazorchak, Director GWSA

In discussing other sections of the report, Councilors agreed to remove the section entitled: "Vermont Pathways Analysis Report Executive Summary," because the consultant summary is not finalized. In addition, councilors agreed to minor edits to the preceding section, "Cumulative Assessment of Action on Carbon Reduction for 2025 and 2030 requirements" to reflect that the executive summary is not yet final. Councilor suggested edits to the executive summary of CAP around the section on Guiding Principles which included deletion of co-creation. These edits should be reflected in implementation section too and will be shared via email.

5:30 PM Final Comments and adjourn

Councilors agreed that the Dec 1 meeting will focus on 1) ensuring Councilors understand what is in the final text, 2) offering an opportunity to provide dissents for specific issues, if needed, while not offering the possibility to make adjustments to the language of the main text (with the exception of situations in which the text doesn't capture all the edits the Council agreed to, and 3), and finally voting on whether to adopt the plan.