

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGIONAL ENERGY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 23, 2017
MEETING NOTES**

The regular meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Regional Energy Committee was held on Monday, January 23, 2017 at 4:00PM in Conference Room 1 of the Central Vermont Medical Center.

Committee Members Present:

Jamie Stewart – Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
Brian Fitzgerald – RPC Representative - Town of Duxbury
Bram Towbin – Town of Plainfield Selectboard
Don LaHaye – RPC Representative - Town of Waitsfield
Alex Bravakis – Novus Energy Development
Barbara Conrey – City of Montpelier Energy Committee
Ron Krauth – RPC Representative - Town of Middlesex
Paul Zabriskie – Capstone Community Action
Steve Fitzhugh – Town of Northfield Planning Commission
Karen Horn – Vermont League of Cities & Towns
Karin McNeill – Agency of Natural Resources
Anne Margolis – Vermont Public Service Department

Committee Members Not Present:

Jackie Cassino – Agency of Transportation
Billy Coster – Agency of Natural Resources
Patty Richards – Washington Electric Coop
Julie Potter – RPC Representative - Town of East Montpelier
Janet Shatney – RPC Representative - Barre City
Robert Dostis – Green Mountain Power
Mark Sousa – Green Mountain Transit

Others Present:

Eric Vorwald – CVRPC Senior Planner
Marian Wolz – CVRPC Assistant Planner

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fitzhugh at 4:04PM.

CHANGES OR AMMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

No changes to the agenda were recommended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No members of the public presented comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bram Towbin moved to approve the December 12, 2016 minutes as presented; Ron Krauth seconded. Motion carried.

ACT 174 ENERGY PLANNING STANDARDS & REGIONAL ENERGY PLAN OVERVIEW:

Mr. Vorwald provided an overview of the Act 174 Energy Planning Standards noting that the Regional Energy Plan would be laid out in-line to meet the standards set by Act 174. He noted there are three main components to the standards including Analysis & Targets; Pathways/Implementation Actions; and Energy Resource and Constraint Mapping.

Mr. Towbin asked a question about including hydroelectric activities that a town might undertake in the count of current energy generation and how the plan would discuss regulation of these small scale hydropower projects. Mr. Fitzhugh noted that small scale hydroelectric projects fall under the FERC (Federal Energy Regulation Commission).

Mr. Vorwald noted that hydroelectric and biomass projects will be counted in the current energy generation use for towns. Ms. McNeill asked a question about setting efficiency and energy reduction goals and if those goals are provided. Ms. Wolz noted that while the RPCs are not directly given goals for energy efficiency and reduction like they are for solar and wind renewable energy generation, setting goals for efficiency and reduction will be an important component of the energy planning process and will involve input from the member municipalities. Ms. Horn asked a question about the origin of the renewable energy generation targets from the Department of Public Service.

Ms. Margolis responded with a background of the target setting and that they originate from the Comprehensive Energy Plan and the work on energy planning with the pilot RPCs. Ms. Margolis added that all energy projects permitted by the Department of Public Service up to late December 2016 are already included in the renewable energy generation targets. The targets the RPCs have reflect the new generation needed for the Region.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about considering the economic feasibility of renewable siting projects. Ms. Wolz noted that while doing in-depth economic feasibility analysis for energy siting projects is not a requirement of the Energy Planning Standards and will not be a component of the Regional Energy Plan, CVRPC is looking to engage municipalities in the conversation of more general economic feasibility (ie. is a site in proximity to transmission lines/consumers). Mr. Zabriskie brought up the importance

of building codes and how municipalities can use them to implement efficiency and reduction requirements such as installing LED lights or toilet flush limits to increase capacity of the municipal water system. He noted the importance of focusing the Regional Energy Plan on efficiency and reduction measures just as much as generation and siting policies.

Mr. Stewart brought up the importance of keeping the focus of this effort at a regional level and that getting into too much detail regarding specific sites or specific economic feasibility will defeat the purpose of the plan. Mr. Fitzhugh followed up with the remark that this plan will look forward 30 years and cannot account for technology advances that may appear in the future.

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

Ms. Wolz gave an overview on the public engagement timeline and asked Committee members to provide input on the groups the plan will seek to engage, the mechanisms for engagement and the input that would be most useful to gain from specific groups.

Mr. Towbin noted that Town Meeting Day would be a good way to introduce the work of the Regional Energy Committee to municipalities and to engage interested landowners, business owners etc. It was suggested that materials might be prepared that could be provided at Town Meeting Day or bullet points that could be presented.

In general, the Committee was supportive of the proposed public engagement activities and recommended that staff utilize existing meetings as much as possible to limit the number of new meets that may need to be scheduled.

MUNICIPAL INPUT SURVEY:

Ms. Wolz provided an overview of a survey that will be used to solicit input from municipal organizations including elected officials, planning commissions, energy committees, and conservation commissions. The primary purpose of this survey will be to gather municipal information regarding constraints and preferred sites for possible renewable energy siting. Ms. Wolz noted this would be one of two surveys to be sent out and the expectation is that each entity being targeted would fill out one survey for the group. This was being done in an effort to have each group discuss the issues among themselves and provide one voice moving forward.

Finally, it was noted that comments on the survey should be provided back to staff by the end of the week or beginning of the following week. This was being requested in an effort to have the survey distributed to municipalities so the information could be discussed at their regular meetings in February. It was also noted that responses to the survey would not be due back until the end of February to provide adequate time for municipal discussion.

SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

Mr. Vorwald asked about scheduling future Regional Energy Committee meetings. The committee agreed that Wednesdays or Thursdays at 4PM the end of the month would work best. Mr. Vorwald noted he would send out a poll to all committee members to ask about specific future meeting dates.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Towbin moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Zabriskie. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. With no other business the meeting was adjourned at 5:56PM.