

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGIONAL ENERGY COMMITTEE**

**March 30, 2017
MEETING NOTES**

The regular meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Regional Energy Committee was held on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 4:00PM in the Board Room of the Central Vermont Medical Center.

Committee Members Present:

Jamie Stewart – Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
Bram Towbin – Town of Plainfield Selectboard
Alex Bravakis – Novus Energy Development
Steve Fitzhugh – Town of Northfield Planning Commission
Karin McNeill – Agency of Natural Resources
Jackie Cassino – Agency of Transportation
Julie Potter – RPC Representative - Town of East Montpelier
Robert Dostis – Green Mountain Power
Barbara Conrey – City of Montpelier Energy Committee
Paul Zabriskie – Capstone Community Action
Karen Horn – Vermont League of Cities & Towns
Don LaHaye – RPC Representative - Town of Waitsfield

Committee Members Not Present:

Patty Richards – Washington Electric Coop
Mark Sousa – Green Mountain Transit
Brian Fitzgerald – RPC Representative - Town of Duxbury
Ron Krauth – RPC Representative - Town of Middlesex
Dan Potter – Vermont Public Service Department
Janet Shatney – RPC Representative - Barre City

Others Present:

Eric Vorwald – CVRPC Senior Planner
Marian Wolz – CVRPC Assistant Planner
Janice Ohlsson – Town of Calais
John Brabant – Town of Calais
Harrison Snapp – Town of Waitsfield

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fitzhugh at 4:06PM. Since several members of the public were in attendance, Mr. Fitzhugh asked for a round of introductions.

CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

No changes to the agenda were recommended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Brabant from Calais made the comment that he found the makeup of committee members, strange. He noted that he felt the representation on the on committee was not representative of the towns in the region.

Ms. Potter responded that the Regional Commission established the Energy Committee as an advisory committee, not to make decisions for the Regional Commission, but rather to help draft an informed energy plan that ultimately the Regional Commission will discuss for approval. She noted that the Regional Commission felt it would be helpful to have representatives from utilities, renewable energy developers and state agencies on the Energy Committee to provide helpful insights and information as the plan is being developed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Jamie Stewart moved to approve the February 23, 2016 minutes as presented; Julie Potter seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 9-0 with two members abstaining noting they were not in attendance at the February meeting.

MUNICIPAL INPUT SURVEY & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION UPDATE:

Ms. Wolz provided an analysis of the Regional Energy Plan input survey that was completed by municipal entities over the month of February. She discussed the multiple choice and comment responses received and how those illustrated certain themes relating to the energy discussion in the region.

Mr. Bravakis noted that in question 7 of the survey, the question should have been about distribution lines, not transmission lines. Mr. Towbin asked if the construction of new distribution lines would actually make a difference in aesthetics. Ms. McNeil added that the focus should be on the land use implications of siting energy generators away from existing infrastructure.

Ms. Wolz concluded the presentation on the survey results by noting that staff recommended incorporating the suggested regional constraints as possible constraints, but leaving the incorporation of additional municipal constraints up to the municipality. She added that the regional energy maps can be viewed as the 'broad brush' maps and that municipalities that decide to pursue energy planning will be able to add detail to the municipal level maps as long as they are able to demonstrate they can provide sufficient land to meet the region's megawatt hour targets.

REGIONAL & MUNICIPAL TARGETS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY:

Ms. Wolz began the discussion on the new megawatt hour targets by demonstrating how the state determined the region's targets using the share of state population. She then discussed examples of what installed capacity and actual generation are for different types of renewable electric energy generators in the region.

The questions of whether the targets take in account total vehicle fuel switching to electric power was brought up. Ms. Wolz noted she believed they did but would check to make sure.

Ms. Potter noted it would be helpful to see the acreage for the renewable electric energy generation sites as compared to their installed capacity and actual generation. The Committee also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using population as the only factor for distributing the regional share to the municipalities. It was discussed that listing the existing generation by municipality would be important to determine how much new generation may be needed. Ms. Wolz noted that she would work to identify existing generation numbers by municipality.

Finally, Ms. Wolz noted that discussion at the February meeting included identifying existing electricity use by municipality to help further refine the municipal breakdown of regional targets. Ms. Wolz noted that she was still working with the Vermont Electric Energy Corporation to separate electricity use by municipality since it is currently presented by zip code. Ms. Wolz stated that she should have more information at the next meeting.

REVIEW OF ENERGY PLANNING STANDARDS & ENERGY PLANNING CONSISTENCY:

Mr. Vorwald began by describing staff's proposal to use the text from the energy element from the 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan as the starting point to work off of for the Energy Element under development. The Energy Element being developed will be incorporated into Plan Central Vermont and will serve as the energy chapter for the regional plan. Eric asked the committee for comments and approval for using the existing text from the 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan Energy Chapter as a basis for building the Energy Element under discussion. Ms. Cassino asked if there would be more in depth discussion at later meetings to refine and address specific policies and data updates. Mr. Vorwald confirmed that the text from the 2016 Regional Plan would serve as the base for the Energy Plan development, and that there would be significant discussion on data updates and policies refining that would need to be added in order to have the Energy Plan meet the Department of Public Service's Regional Energy Standards.

Mr. Fitzhugh asked for a verbal approval of Mr. Vorwald's question, and the committee unanimously voiced their approval of using the 2016 Energy Chapter of the Regional Plan as the starting point for the Energy Plan development.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Vorwald noted that the next meeting of the Regional Energy Committee would be on Thursday, April 27th and be held in the Memorial Room at Montpelier City Hall.

ADJOURN:

With no additional business to discuss Ms. McNeil moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Zabriski. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:00pm.