

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Project Review Committee

March 27, 2025 4:00pm

Remote Participation via Zoom

Draft Minutes

Project Review Committee Members

X	Lee Cattaneo, Orange Commissioner
	John Brabant, Calais Commissioner
X	Bill Arrand, Worcester Commissioner
	Peter Carbee, Washington Commissioner
	Robert Wernecke, Berlin Commissioner
X	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Alternate Commissioner

1 Staff: Christian Meyer, Sam Lash, Will Pitkin (in person)
2 Commissioners: Mitch Osiecki, Middlesex Alternate Commissioner; James Crafts, Warren Commissioner

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4 L. Cattaneo called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

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6 **Public comment**

7 None

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9 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

10 None

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12 **Approval of Minutes**

13 W. Arrand moved to approve the February 27, 2025 meeting's draft minutes, A. Peal seconded, all in
14 favor, motion carried.

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16 **Legislative Update**

17 S. Lash provided summaries of two bills in the state legislature that had just crossed over to the other
18 chamber and, if passed, might affect the Project Review Committee. The first bill is S.57, which would
19 reauthorize the standard offer program for construction of new renewable energy projects. Some
20 comments suggested raising the limit from 2.2MW to 5MW for projects that could participate in the
21 program, but draft language to date has not reflected that suggestion.

22
23 The next bill was S.50, which would raise the size limit for renewable energy projects that could
24 participate in an expedited approval process for net-metering from 15kW to 25kW. This likely would not
25 have a large impact on the committee's work because the 15kW and 25kw are both below the
26 thresholds for substantial regional impact and the bill does not propose to change the size of projects
27 that must request a preferred site letter of support from CVRPC to participate in net-metering (the
28 range that would require preferred site letters of support remains 150kW – 500kW).

29
30 The last bill is H.289, which would nullify the requirements of VT's Renewable Energy Standard and the
31 Global Warming Solutions Act that a certain percentage of electricity come from renewable sources. If
32 this bill passes, the committee might review fewer renewable energy projects.

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2 **Review and Possibly Recommend that Board of Commissioners Adopt Substantial Regional Impact**
3 **Guidelines**

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5 Discussion began with a summary of the Regional Plan Committee’s feedback on the proposed
6 substantial regional impact (“SRI”) definition and guidelines.

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8 C. Meyer noted that CVRPC’s newest commissioner, J. Crafts, had joined the discussion to learn how
9 CVRPC operates.

10
11 W. Pitkin summarized that the committee had previously expressed a preference to keep the SRI
12 definition in the regional plan relatively vague and qualitative and house the more specific numerical
13 thresholds for what constitutes SRI (which the Project Review Committee developed in 2018) in a
14 separate document that was easier to modify as needed. Staff had landed on the Project Review
15 Committee Rules of Process as the most appropriate location for the specific numerical SRI guidelines,
16 so the draft Rules of Process in the meeting packet include the 2018 guidelines plus additional
17 documents clarify how staff and the committee review projects.

18
19 A member of the Regional Plan Committee suggested lowering the numerical thresholds at that
20 committee’s previous meeting; the Project Review Committee discussed that suggestion and decided to
21 keep the thresholds the same.

22
23 Discussion turned to whether a more specific definition of SRI in the regional plan grants CVRPC greater
24 legal standing in appeals of permit decisions before courts.

25
26 One other way that SRI is important that had not been discussed with the committee before is that, in
27 permit applications (or appeals of permit decisions), when there is a conflict between municipal plans
28 and regional plans, the permitting authority decides whether to review the application for conformance
29 with the municipal plan or the regional plan based on whether the proposed development would have
30 SRI. In applications where the proposed development would be in conformance with the municipal plan
31 but not in conformance with the regional plan, developers might argue that the development does not
32 need to be in conformance with the regional plan if the definition of SRI in the regional plan is so vague
33 that SRI determinations could be considered arbitrary. Discussion followed regarding the appropriate
34 levels of specificity in the regional plan versus in internal CVRPC guidance documents. The committee
35 decided to proceed with the proposed SRI definition in the regional plan and the draft Project Review
36 Committee Rules of Process.

37
38 **Updates on Recent Act 250, Section 248, and Section 248a Applications**

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40 W. Pitkin stated that there were no new applications since the previous meeting that the committee
41 was required to review and none that stood out as important for optional review. Staff have completed
42 all the follow-up items from the previous meeting (preferred site letter of support for one Section 248
43 net-metering application and comments on two other Section 248 applications that have gone to
44 hearing). The committee did not have any additional projects that they wanted to review.

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2 **Adjournment**

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4 *A. Peal moved to adjourn, W. Arrand seconded, all in favor, motion carried.*

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6 *Minutes taken by W. Pitkin.*

DRAFT