

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Draft Minutes**  
August 21, 2025

**Commissioners:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barre City	Janet Shatney, Sec/Treas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moretown	David Stapleton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joyce Manchester, Alt
<input type="checkbox"/> Barre Town	Alice Farrell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northfield	Royal DeLegge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phil Cecchini	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Schulz, Alt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlin	Robert Wernecke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orange	Lee Cattaneo, Vice Chair
<input type="checkbox"/>	Karla Nuisssl, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plainfield	Paula Emery
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cabot	Brittany Butler	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Atchinson, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calais	John Brabant	<input type="checkbox"/> Roxbury	Jerry D'Amico
<input type="checkbox"/>	Melanie Kehne, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waitsfield	Alice Peal
<input type="checkbox"/> Duxbury	David Wendt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don La Haye, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Warren	Jim Crafts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. Montpelier	Zoe Christiansen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam Zawistowski, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clarice Cutler, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Washington	Peter Carbee, Chair
<input type="checkbox"/> Fayston	Andrew McNealus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waterbury	Doug Greason
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshfield	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Williamstown	Richard Turner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middlesex	Ron Krauth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Osiecki, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodbury	Michael Gray
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Montpelier	Mike Miller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worcester	Bill Arrand

Staff: Christian Meyer, Nancy Chartrand, Niki Sabado, Brian Voigt, Reuben MacMartin, Lory Banbury  
Guests: Stephen Whitaker, Montpelier; Thomas Weiss, Montpelier; Sarah Miller; Sean Linehan, Montpelier Planning Commission; Renee Carpenter, East Montpelier; Leah Candland, Montpelier Planning Commission; Ben Doyle, Montpelier City Council; Aaron Kisicki, Montpelier Planning Commission; Andrew Christiansen

**Call to Order:** Chair Carbee called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm, a roll call was completed, and a quorum was present.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** There was clarification on what would be voted on as outlined in the agenda.

**Public Comments:** Chair Carbee advised that for the Montpelier City Plan there would be a five minute time limit per person. For comments unrelated to items on the agenda there would be a three-minute time limit per person during public comment and opened the floor. Stephen Whitaker read from a prepared statement, asserting that a public hearing is required by 24 VSA, §4350 and noted today's meeting was warned as a public meeting so he believes it may not meet statutory requirements. He also asserted the Regional Planning Commission's (RPC's) role in the review process may be compromised when author of the municipal plan being reviewed is also the municipality's appointed RPC's commissioner, serves on the Regional Plan Committee and participates in shaping the review process. He asserted recusal from final vote is necessary. Christian Meyer responded there is nowhere in statute that it states a hearing should be before the full board of commissioners, and this has been our practice since 2018 when adopted by municipal plan review committee, executive committee and the full board as part of the rules of procedure for each committee; he also noted this is how it is done throughout the state.

**Montpelier City Plan:** Christian Meyer reviewed the three motions outlined in the meeting packet and outlined the process for the meeting. He advised the Montpelier City Plan has been adopted by the municipality, staff has reviewed the plan, the Municipal Plan Review Committee (MPRC) has held a hearing and moved to recommend approval, the Board wanted additional time to receive response to public testimony and requested this special meeting. The packet includes regional checklist (state requirements and state planning goals), compatibility assessment with the regional plan, public comments with staff research and response. Niki Sabado also reviewed background of the plan review process as outlined in the packet.

The floor was opened to public comment on the Montpelier City Plan (MCP):

Mike Miller opened the public comment with an intro to the MCP noting it was a long-involved process that resulted in a new innovative plan design. It is intended to be viewed as a web-based document but is also downloadable and printable. He advised it was the first of its kind in Vermont and was awarded Vermont Planners Association Plan of the Year for 2025. He noted the process included many opportunities for public participation which were detailed. He noted the plan meets state requirements and deserves Commissioner approval. He also took a few moments to share matrices of comments from public, staff comments, and decisions made as a result of the comments.

Brian Voigt read Mayor McCullough's letter into the record. In which the mayor urged the Board to approve Montpelier's plan. It was confirmed the date of the letter was August 21, 2025.

Thomas Weiss noted some unaddressed concerns from his previous comments. He asserted the plan does not show inventory studies and analyses of current trends where appropriate and was troubled by the lack of response to this comment. He believes there was no solid information and analyses as required by statute in the City Plan. He also noted the lack of cost estimates and method of financing for future needs. He noted the cost level of high-med-low but stated the plan has no outline of the definitions of those. He believes staff response is inappropriate given the city's annual budget. He noted the City's present Capital Improvement Plan only extends to middle of 2028. He believes these are serious omissions in the City Plan.

Stephen Whitaker stated he believes there is dysfunction in the Montpelier Planning Department and in the Regional Planning Commission review process. He read from a memo as to why the MCP should not be approved at this time. He asserted the MPC is not compatible with the existing Regional Plan. Specifically noting the following four-part compatibility test which examines:

1. land use designation alignment
2. Impacts on critical resources
3. Infrastructure capacity
4. Potential for mitigation

He believes the MCP does not have the outlined analysis for Country Club Road (CCR) and believes it must before the plan can be found compatible and further went on to state his transportation concerns. He protested the 5-minute limit, again stating it was required to be a public hearing. He noted additional concerns with the White & Burke report on CCR, master planning development, the city decision to not pursue a growth center. He believes the MCP has no binding integrative framework for CCR. He reiterated he does not believe the MCP is compatible and a public hearing is required.

Ben Doyle, resident and member of City Council thanked the Board for their leadership and noted the importance of planning and stated he strongly supports the MCP. He reiterated there was an active participation process throughout and that the critics are full of passionate intensity and are entitled to those opinions, but noted it is important that it not subvert the process. He further outlined the process that was

undertaken and reiterated the importance to the City of Montpelier that we move forward in a positive and optimistic way and requests the RPC's approval.

Sean Linehan, Montpelier Planning Commission, also spoke in support of the City Plan, reiterating points made by Mike Miller, Ben Doyle and the Mayor. He thanked the RPC for putting together the assessment document that was included in tonight's packet.

The floor was opened to discussion by the Board. Zoe Christiansen stated that she does not disagree with the plan based only on feelings and emotion but based on statistics and data. She shared concerns about housing and traffic issues which she asserted have not been addressed.

Alice Peal raised concerns regarding the City's Growth Center application being withdrawn. She asserted the Plan can't be voted on until document is edited with the narrative changed because City Council applying for the Growth Center is still a goal highlighted in housing and land use chapters. She requested Montpelier come back with a plan the Board can vote on, suggesting that an extension could be applied for.

John Brabant reiterated he met with Peter Carbee and Christian Meyer regarding his concerns in July. He asserted most of the plan appears to be well done but noted there are problems with the traffic. He asserted the Board's role is not to just approved town plans. He noted the role of the commission is to look out for the region to cooperatively work together on a plan for development and its infrastructure. He stated it should be ensured we put together a program where everyone works well together, and burdens aren't shifted from one municipality to another. He went on to further state his traffic concerns related to the potential CCR development. He noted concerns with the town being a developer and self-regulator. He shared concern with staff's review of the transportation and requested the Board not vote for the City Plan. He reminded board members they are only voting on the plan language and reiterated CCR is currently designated as rural ag, stating it is conflict. He stated if we are not going to be the check on development spilling into other communities, we are not doing our jobs.

Mike Miller noted that CCR is just one portion of the City Plan and reminded the Board that plans are aspirational – and the growth center is a strategy – not a goal. The goal to develop the area is still in play. He reiterated the housing needs in Montpelier and the numbers suggested to be needed in the region. He reiterated Montpelier is a job center and the need for more housing close to the downtown to avoid pressure on rural countryside. He reiterated 600 units was planned throughout Montpelier, not specifically at CCR. He noted currently the city is working to address the traffic concerns and that traffic impact statements occur when you have a project. He noted a preliminary assessment was completed two years ago, and a full assessment would not be completed until a project is planned. He reiterated that Montpelier has professional staff (engineer) to complete analysis and have a traffic impact study completed. He again reiterated plans are aspirational documents and don't need to be revised every time something within them changes and noted it is required to have options in the plan. He reiterated the Board will have opportunity to have a say when such projects may come forward in the future.

Zoe Christiansen shared additional concerns related to housing and regarding new development and economics of new workers and whether they could afford brand new housing. She also shared her concern regarding short term rentals and urged people to take more time to review stating there is no need to rush and for it to be refined before it is pushed through.

Alice Peal took issue with the comment that Montpelier is solving problems for the rest of towns, noting it will not solve Mad River Valley's problems. She reiterated the traffic issue and its regional impact. She also noted the Land Use Review Board Tier III overlay may affect the type of building and environmental issues in many areas. She states every municipality has unique problems and noted the plan is conceptual but doesn't believe

it is ready for completion yet. She again made note of Montpelier needing to change growth center language due to withdrawing its recent application, specifically related to HO.7 “continue to participate in the growth center program and expand the district as appropriate”.

Mike Miller clarified that the city already has a growth center so the description “continue to participate in the growth center program and expand the district as appropriate” is correct as they will expand as appropriate in the future. He commented Montpelier is not trying to solve everyone’s problem, but they want to try to do their part to bring more housing to the region and to Montpelier. He noted the city purchased the CCR property with the intention to try and create affordable housing up to a certain percentage. He noted the design of the through roads are to make public transportation more efficient. He also noted that the three major barriers to participation in workforce are affordable housing, childcare and public transportation. Montpelier has plans for each one of those pieces. He reiterated future traffic assessments will be completed.

Christian Meyer followed up on some of the comments that have been made. He stated he believed the plan is strong on data, specifically the housing section. The point about short term rentals is great and is a level of detail that hasn’t been required yet. He clarified the need to take action within 60 days/2 months of the last public hearing per statute and noted we are coming up to that near the end of this month and if we haven’t approved the plan, we need to provide a reason to the municipality as to why not. Our not approving does not invalidate the plan. He also spoke to the fact that incentives and statutes are constantly changing and requiring plans to constantly change to meet those seems to be a hard bar to pass. He clarified there is not an option to extend a municipal plan. He stated the plan being conceptual is what is usually expected of a municipal/master plan. He asserted a lot of the details related to traffic are going to come in the implementation process. It is the board’s responsibility to address the regional burden in the regional plan, speaking to rural land use and vague interpretations of compatibility.

Zoe Christiansen again reiterated she has received no information on why more affordable housing should be built and states we only need affordable housing in the legislative sense. She also shared her opinions on public transportation. She also brought up concerns with homelessness and transitional housing.

John Brabant reiterated the problem is conflating what is in the plan with what is going on outside the plan, noting we are voting on the language that is in the plan. He stated the plan does not discuss CCR development, and alternative routes to that development and reiterated his concerns related to that and current transportation issues. He’s concerned with that project going to the Land Use Review Board and our Project Review Committee stating it is consistent with our regional plan based on our approval of the MPC if we approve tonight. He again urged commissioners to not vote yes and believes the board is setting itself up for legal jeopardy if they vote yes.

Robert Wernecke stated he would like the board to move forward noting we’ve heard from the same people repeatedly.

Royal DeLegge echoed Robert’s comment and also noted Northfield’s plan is an aspirational plan and their planning commission would not want the RPC to specify infinitely small details on what they could and could not do in an aspirational document. He believes the RPC role is simple - is this plan that Montpelier has presented conformant with the regional plan, he reiterated the process that has occurred and stated he would like to see process move forward.

Paula Emery noted hearing strong positions on both sides, and asked if there was a no vote are there specific recommendations that the board would need to make at this meeting tonight.

***Robert Wernecke moved to approve the City of Montpelier Plan, seconded by David Stapleton.***

Christian responded to Paula's question, noting we would have to supply a reason to municipality why it did not pass. "We" would be the board, so dissenters would have to play a role in drafting that.

Bill Arrand asked Christian how he would address this major problem of the traffic. Christian spoke to compatibility stating we would have to demonstrate how the traffic impact of development along the two phased project of Sabins Pasture and CCR would negatively impact one of our policies, we do have a policy around maintaining a good level of service on all our roads, so would need to then demonstrate that this would not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan. We would have to show that it would significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the CVRPC plan as currently written. John Brabant reframed what he said for clarity – he reiterated it was because the CCR project in the plan was so specific stating it would use one road, and our approving the plan would say using one road is consistent and not a conflict with our regional plan expectations.

Bill Arrand asked Mike Miller to address John's comments. Mike read from the MCP the LU1 CCR Strategy reiterating that it states what the CCR site could accommodate, not what it will accommodate. It states "this site could accommodate at least 300 housing units, although the exact number will be determined by the development process, the housing will likely be built by for-profit and non-profit entities over the coming years but it will require the city to extend the utilities such as sewer and water, and to build out the road system". For transportation for CCR the MPC states "regarding transportation this site offers an opportunity to provide significant improvements in Montpelier's connectivity. Today nearly all vehicles are funneled through the downtown. The CCR and Sabins Pasture projects could allow a complete street that connects the East Montpelier Road to Barre Street and College Street. In the future a connection could also be made to Towne Hill but no route has been identified at this time." He stated these are not definitive, but they are aspirations that they are aspirations / goals. He encouraged commissioners to support the plan. He reiterated every project would have a traffic study which would analyze the most appropriate way to address. He reiterated the document is aspirational and that housing is needed.

Royal Delegge thanked the Chair Carbee for hearing all opinions and stated a lot of reiteration is occurring and called the question. Chair Carbee requested the public comment be allowed first. Royal requested new information only be allowed. Brian Voigt spoke briefly on Tier III designations under the future land use map, noting skepticism that much if any of Montpelier would be designated as a Tier III. With regard to an Act 250 project coming to the board for review, he noted this is not a forgone conclusion, primarily because to the City may choose pursue either Tier Ia or Tier Ib designations under the future land use map, both of which carry some waivers for review of housing. Therefore review of any CCR housing project may not go for review in front of the Act 250 board.

Chair Carbee opened the floor to public comment – 2 minutes per person.

Stephen Whitaker asserted CCR was not walkable/bikeable, stating it was several miles from town. He stated that a traffic study wasn't completed for the lease with Turtle Island for a day care of 100 students. He believes it should have triggered a study. He asserted the areas where this is not compliant is traffic, the rural designation on the existing regional plan, and on prime ag soils. He stated the 4 part analysis has not been done by staff or the City Planner for these, which requires identifying inconsistency, consider reasonable alternatives and evaluate the benefit vs the detriment and propose mitigation. He states the MPC can't be approved as is until the regional plan is readopted next year.

Aaron Kisicki stated he's been on Planning Commission for 7-8 years and noted work was already underway for this plan at that time. He stated the Planning Commission grappled mightily with how to properly scope this plan and document. They acknowledged it was a fluid situation with respect to housing, economical development and transportation and deliberately scoped it in a way that would allow them to be flexible and

allow for implementation plans to fill in any significant gaps in the aspirations and goals that are laid out by the plan. He noted the Planning Commission is committed to have continued discussions with stakeholders in potentially revisiting certain chapters of the plan to improve it.

Chair Carbee reviewed the motions before the Board:

- 1) Approval of the Montpelier City Plan 2025.
- 2) Confirm the planning process of the City of Montpelier.
- 3) Adopt the resolution documenting the Montpelier City Plan approval and planning process confirmation by CVRPC.

***Vote called for approval of the plan and roll call conducted with discussion stating Mike Miller should vote: Barre City – yes; Berlin – aye; Cabot – aye; Calais – no; East Montpelier – no; Middlesex – yes; Montpelier – aye; Moretown – aye; Northfield – aye; Orange – aye; Plainfield - abstain; Waitsfield – no; Washington – aye; Waterbury – aye; Williamstown – no; Woodbury – yes; Worcester – aye; It was confirmed the motion passes with 12 ayes, 4 nays and 1 abstention***

***Lee Cattaneo moved confirmation of planning process seconded by Bill Arrand.***

***Vote called and roll call conducted: Barre City – aye; Berlin – aye; Cabot – aye; Calais – dropped from meeting; East Montpelier – dropped from meeting; Middlesex – yes; Montpelier – yes; Moretown – yes; Northfield – yes; Orange – yes; Plainfield - abstain; Waitsfield – abstain; Washington – aye; Waterbury – aye; Williamstown – no; Woodbury – yes; Worcester – aye. It was confirmed the motion passes with 12 ayes, 1 nay, and 2 abstentions***

Chair Carbee read the resolution into the record.

***Robert Wernecke moved to sign the resolution, seconded by Janet Shatney.***

***Vote called and roll call conducted: Barre City – yes; Berlin – aye; Cabot – aye; Calais – dropped from meeting; East Montpelier – dropped from meeting; Middlesex – yes; Montpelier – yes; Moretown – yes; Northfield – aye; Orange – aye; Plainfield - abstain; Waitsfield – dropped from meeting; Washington – aye; Waterbury – aye; Williamstown – no; Woodbury – yes; Worcester – aye. It was confirmed the motion passes with 12 ayes, 1 nay, and 1 abstention and that Chair Carbee would be signing.***

***Adjournment: Lee Cattaneo moved to adjourn at 8:48 pm; seconded by David Stapleton. Motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager