

# CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## Project Review Committee

September 25, 2025, 4:00 pm

*Remote Participation via Zoom*

## Draft Minutes

### Project Review Committee Members

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

1 Staff: Lorraine Banbury, Sam Lash, Christian Meyer, Keith Cubbon

2 Public: Stephen Whitaker (Montpelier)

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4 L. Cattaneo called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm. A quorum was confirmed with three members  
5 present at the outset (L. Cattaneo, J. Brabant, A. Peal), and later B. Arrand joined.

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### 7 Adjustments to the Agenda

8 None

9

### 10 Public comment

11 Stephen Whitaker of Montpelier provided detailed public comment. He informed the committee that  
12 Montpelier City Council had voted the previous night to approve a \$7 million Country Club Road upgrade  
13 project to raise a section of U.S. Route 2 by nearly three feet between the railroad crossing and beyond  
14 the rotary, then lowering it again further down. He emphasized the transportation impacts, citing  
15 concerns raised during Montpelier's city plan review by East Montpelier representatives about rotary  
16 congestion and Gallison Hill traffic. He suggested the project merited scrutiny and possible review by the  
17 PRC, given its dependence on CDBG-DR and other funding sources.

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19 Discussion followed on whether and how the committee could engage with issues not on the posted  
20 agenda. L. Cattaneo asserted that items must be on the agenda for discussion. J. Brabant disagreed,  
21 stating that under Robert's Rules public comment can be responded to and discussed briefly, provided  
22 no action is taken. A. Peal attempted to ask clarifying questions about the road project but agreed to  
23 defer the conversation. Staff recommended gathering additional information on the Council's action and  
24 placing the matter on a future PRC agenda, ensuring all relevant schematics and minutes are available to  
25 Commissioners before the meeting. Ultimately, consensus emerged to seek clarification on Open  
26 Meeting Law and Robert's Rules regarding discussion of public comments, and to revisit the Route 2  
27 project at a future meeting with adequate notice to the public.

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### 30 Approval of Minutes

31 The draft minutes of August 28, 2025 were reviewed. J. Brabant and staff noted a duplicated section on  
32 Conservation Easements (both heading and paragraph) that would be corrected. With that amendment,

1 J. Brabant moved to approve the minutes. B. Arrand seconded. The motion passed unanimously.  
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#### 4 **Letters of Compatibility** 5

6 C. Meyer presented a review of the letters of compatibility process, explaining their use in grant  
7 applications. Projects are often conceptual and submitted under tight deadlines, with staff historically  
8 drafting letters based on the Regional Plan. Some letters are municipal (road reconstruction, restoration,  
9 large residential) while others involve other entities (e.g., Downstreet Housing, Good Samaritan Haven  
10 relocation). The interim Act 250 exemption areas established by the legislature were noted, extending  
11 through December 31, 2026.  
12

13 Commissioners discussed whether the PRC should formally review these letters. A. Peal strongly  
14 supported PRC involvement, even at a high level, to ensure alignment with the Regional Plan and to flag  
15 concerns early. She requested that letters explicitly state they were developed with both staff and PRC  
16 review. She also emphasized the importance of reserving the right to comment more substantively as  
17 projects progress. L. Cattaneo recommended establishing clear criteria, like Act 250 reviews, to  
18 determine which letters rise to the level of PRC review. He suggested distinguishing between significant  
19 new development versus other smaller projects.  
20

21 J. Brabant raised concerns about the addressee Gary Golka of Cabot lacking identification of his official  
22 role. Staff agreed to confirm recipient roles and titles, including for Downstreet and other organizations,  
23 and update addressees as appropriate. Commissioners generally agreed staff should continue  
24 submitting letters to meet deadlines, while PRC and the full Board of Commissioners work together to  
25 develop a standardized process for involvement and possible ratification. Staff will draft proposed  
26 criteria and procedures and bring them to the Board of Commissioners for consideration before  
27 returning to PRC.  
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#### 29 **Act 250 & Section 248 Updates**

30 S. Lash reported no new major applications but provided updates: the Berlin Solar Canopy project (ice  
31 rink/town offices) had resubmitted, and CVRPC's prior letter of support was acknowledged. The  
32 Middlesex tower co-location petition was still under review, with a staff letter supporting the use of  
33 existing infrastructure already prepared. She also presented monthly tracking of smaller distributed  
34 energy projects. July and August saw 230–240 kW of rooftop and backyard solar across about 20–27  
35 projects in 10 towns. September was trending similarly. There is an expectation that this will fall off as  
36 rebates and incentives expire. Staff is tracking trends and hopes to add mapping and utility territory  
37 information. Commissioners noted the importance of monitoring smaller-scale projects, even if CVRPC  
38 has no formal role, to understand regional patterns. J. Brabant commented on emerging micro-solar  
39 technologies, and the discussion touched on “plug-in” balcony solar, regulatory changes, and the pause  
40 in Solar for All funding. Staff confirmed developer responsibility for infrastructure upgrades remains the  
41 norm in Vermont.  
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#### 43 **Next Meeting Topics**

44 Potential agenda items identified included:

- 45 • further discussion of the Route 2 / Country Club Road project,
- 46 • clarification of Roberts Rules/Open Meeting Law on public comment,
- 47 • continued review of letters of compatibility process,

- staff's tracking of distributed energy, and
- a presentation by S. Lash on grid resilience based on ongoing Public Utility Commission proceedings.

Commissioners expressed strong interest in receiving updates on utility planning, beneficial electrification, and the impacts of flooding on electric infrastructure.

### **Adjournment**

J. Brabant moved to adjourn. B. Arrand seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by L. Banbury