

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Project Review Committee

May 22, 202, 4:00pm

Remote Participation via Zoom

Draft Minutes

Project Review Committee Members

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

1 Staff: Christian Meyer, Will Pitkin, Sam Lash (in person)

2 Public: Mitch Osiecki, Middlesex representative

3

4 L. Cattaneo called the meeting to order at 4:11pm.

5

6 Public comment

7 None

8

9 Adjustments to the Agenda

10 None

11

12 Approval of Minutes

13 J. Brabant noted that minutes should state the time that the meeting adjourned. P. Carbee moved to
14 approve the April 29, 2025 meeting's draft minutes, A. Peal seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

15

16 Updates on Recent Act 250, Section 248, and Section 248a Applications

17

18 Waitsfield/Fayston GMP Substation Upgrade (Section 248)

19

20 S. Lash summarized Green Mountain Power's most recent advance notice for proposed upgrades to and
21 expansion of a substation on the Waitsfield/Fayston town line, which is the same as the previous
22 advance notice filing but with an updated construction schedule. S. Lash noted that the meeting
23 materials included an assessment of the project's conformance with the Regional Plan based on the
24 information provided in the advance notice, but the conformance of certain elements of the project's
25 conformance could not be assessed until further information is provided in the full petition, for example
26 the natural resources assessment. A. Peal noted that the applicant and their representatives had not yet
27 contacted the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) wetland division to obtain a wetland permit.

28

29 S. Lash noted that there are class 3 wetlands along the boundary of the project site and that class 3
30 wetlands are not known or possible constraints in the ANR Planning Atlas but had been an area of
31 concern in the committee's previous discussions of the project. A. Peal provided background on the
32 wetlands in and around the project site and conversations with ANR representatives regarding how the

1 project would mitigate impacts to wetlands. S. Lash added that the State of Vermont is currently
2 updating its wetland maps and wetland classifications. S. Lash also noted that many substations in the
3 region are located in and around wetlands and that various utilities are already working to remove their
4 substations and transmission infrastructure from wetlands but are running into permitting hurdles
5 because they need to obtain wetland permits to remove their infrastructure from wetlands. S. Lash
6 suggested that CVRPC could advocate for eased permitting requirements for these specific projects due
7 to the long-term benefits to wetlands, in addition to electric infrastructure resilience.

8
9 P. Carbee stated that the new draft wetland maps that ANR showed at a recent public meeting did not
10 include the wetlands in and around the project site and asked whether anyone knew the reason for that
11 possible inconsistency. S. Lash speculated that because class 3 wetlands might not appear in the new
12 maps because they are not considered known or possible constraints in the ANR Planning Atlas.

13
14 P. Carbee moved to direct staff to tell Green Mountain Power that the committee is concerned about
15 potential impacts to wetlands and wants to see further information in the full petition, A. Peal
16 seconded, all in favor, motion passed.

17 18 **Update: Marshfield Verizon Cell Tower (Section 248a)**

19
20 The committee discussed the Verizon affiliate's new advance notice filing – still not an official petition –
21 for the cell tower in Marshfield. The advance notice application stated that it was the same as the
22 previous application but with updated estimates of ground disturbance during construction.

23
24 W. Pitkin summarized Marshfield residents' statements for and against the project at the public meeting
25 that the developer held in the village several months ago. The concerns included alleged health issues
26 (which the PUC is legally prohibited from considering in Section 248a applications), proximity to the
27 village, and whether the project site to the west of the village was the best location to address the dead
28 zones, which are primarily to the north and northeast of the village. Marshfield residents at that
29 meeting, including the landowner directly across the street from the project site, did state that there
30 were dead zones near the project site, as well, although not to the same extent as to the north and
31 northeast of the village. The committee did not request any actions related to the discussion.

32 33 **Update on the Investigation of Resilience of VT's Electric Grid**

34
35 S. Lash provided a summary of the early stages of the PUC's investigation of VT electric grid resilience
36 and the main goals of the investigation. The investigation is attempting to define, value, measure, and
37 plan for resilience of the electric grid across all utilities in the state, including the three operating in the
38 region. S. Lash also summarized outcomes from a recent roundtable featuring mainly utility
39 representatives, plus regional planning commission, state, and municipal representatives. The
40 committee and staff discussed issues related to the investigation, including its connection to previous
41 investigations into grid resilience and similar topics.

42 **Update on the Investigation of Thermal Energy Exchange Networks**

43
44 S. Lash summarized the early stages of an investigation into thermal energy exchange networks, as
45 required by recent state legislation. The PUC requested information primarily related to siting authority,
46 financing and rate regulation, statutory definitions, and language. The Public Service Department
47 submitted comments on these topics, though there had been several requests for deadline extensions;
48 S. Lash noted that thermal energy exchange networks are an example of how municipalities can take

1 steps to meet the regional plan goals related to energy demand reduction, and utilities are now actively
2 participating in these discussions.

3
4 **Adjournment**

5
6 *P. Carbee moved to adjourn, L. Cattaneo seconded, all in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at*
7 *5:02 pm.*

8
9 *Minutes taken by W. Pitkin.*