

NRPC Energy and Climate Committee

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

6:00PM

Virtual meeting on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81879412233?pwd=Mm02WFQ4bFZXTHViZnpaTmpOWm13Zz09>

Attendance:

Members: Anne Jobin-Picard, Liz Gamache, Molly Magnan, Bob Buermann, Dan Seeley, Bill Irwin, Matthew LeFluer, Peter Zamore, Barclay Morris, Al Voegelé, Jenn Wood

Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Marlena Valenta

Guests: Marian Wolz

1. Brief introductions and adjustments to the agenda

No adjustments to the agenda, members introduce their names and hometowns.

2. Presentation on [Vermont's Climate Action Plan](#): *Jane Lazorchak, Global Warming Solutions Act Director*

Marian Wolz is the GWSA Coordinator, and she will be giving the presentation Jane's place. She will be discussing the GWSA, CAP, and the Climate Council. She goes over the climate changes that Vermont has already seen, including increased temperature, precipitation, and changes in season lengths. GWSA created the Climate Council in late 2020, in 2021 the subcommittees began meeting, and in late 2021 they adopted the Climate Action Plan. There are statutory requirements for emission reductions, the first of which is in 2025. Viewing climate action through an equity lens is becoming increasingly common and is important to a just transition. The 5 impact areas of the CAP are cutting climate pollution, capturing carbon, resilient working and natural lands, vital communities, and cross cutting solutions. Transportation is a big issue as it is Vermont's largest GHG emitting sector. Increased walkability, EVs, public transit are all strategies in the plan. Buildings/thermal is the second largest emitting sector, and weatherization and heat pumps are crucial to reducing this. For resilient natural and working lands, reversing the trend of loss of forest and agricultural lands is key. Resilience in our communities is also crucial, making sure that we can withstand the changing climate. Compact settlement, workforce development, and environmental justice are cross cutting solutions that will be important to future climate work. B. Buermann asks that the slides be shared with members. B. Irwin is curious what the penalties for not meeting the emissions reductions are, M. Wolz says that anyone in Vermont could take legal action against ANR, taken to civil court, and the Agency would have to revise the plan and additional rulemaking. P. Zamore is concerned that the public will not understand the cost/benefit analysis and will see the climate change actions costing them money and wants to make sure that the public is really engaged and given the information about what is coming. M. Wolz agrees and notes that there are requirements as far as the true costs of different measures and those reports should be coming soon. M. LeFluer asks about accessibility for people who don't speak English or for people with neurodiversity, and how to make sure that this information is easier for everyone to access and that

there is more connectivity between people in the community. M. Wolz agrees and notes that there has been a wide discussion around the fact that many people do not see themselves reflected in the plan, and that stories and photos are being brought in, and translation is being made accessible through video and specific request abilities. Climate change jargon in general can be alienating and there are researchers helping to make it more accessible.

3. Member introductions roundtable:

*Members describe related interests, areas of expertise and why they joined the committee*

B. Buermann has been on the commission for a long time, helped start the Energy Committee in Grand Isle County which has petered out but he would love to see it restarted.

B. Irwin has worked with electric utilities, studied electrification and policy, and helped look at the early iterations of the Comprehensive Energy Plan. He notes that energy is often not recognized for its large cost in our life and we have to look at ways to reduce our costs of energy in order to prosper. In a state where we value our natural environment so much, its important to consider the impacts of our energy.

A. Jobin-Picard is a librarian and loves research, and has a passion for the environment. She is interested in making sure climate actions are affordable for low to middle income people. She is also interested about how recycling of batteries will work, how four-day work weeks could help, and other less considered part of the issue.

D. Seeley was an astrophysicist and biochemist, has retired now, and has been very interested in more efficient forms of building. He is also part of the Richford Conservation Commission.

P. Zamore is a retired lawyer, and has worked in energy during his career. This has included marketing clean energy, and he is interested in finding ways to get the public involved and that there be a substantial financial plan to support climate action.

B. Morris got a self-design environmental degree at UVM, went to the first Earth Day at Godard College, and had a lot of optimism about changing the world. Cost effective solutions are very important to him.

J. Wood did a self-design sustainability degree, a master's degree in planning, has worked in renewable energy, weatherization, efficiency, worked at GMT, CVOEO, and general volunteer work in the environmental work. Getting people working together, is against plans that do not get used.

M. Magnan teaches science at BFA St. Albans, is very interested in engaging students and has noticed a massive engagement in the climate change section. Wants to find things happening in our state and region that she can bring back to her students. She is also married to a farmer and they are working on more environmentally holistic measures including only plant-based fertilizer and no synthetics.

L. Gamache worked at VEC and Efficiency Vermont, and did not go in with the technical expertise and so feels like she had the experience of being a layperson trying to understand those complex topics. Smart growth is a big interest for her, has worked on Saint Albans revitalization and works with United Way and has connections with many of the local nonprofits.

M. LeFluer is interested in the importance of the volunteer roles that drive these movements, and connecting Vermont as a whole. He has suggestions to bring to the table on how to implement solutions. Children to retirees all have a role to play.

A. Voegele considers himself a globalist, and wants to think about equity in terms across the world. There will need to be a reduction in our consumption of resources so that the world and all individuals can survive. He is interested in making sure that affordable housing is also very efficient.

C. Dimitruk connected with energy issues as a young child who grew up really poor, sometimes not having heat, not having gas in the car. Making sure that rural voices are heard in the approach is really important to her, and making sure we as a state and region are resilient is really important.

M. Valenta was inspired by teachers (like M. Magnan), and feels incredibly hopeful about climate issues because she sees how many people care and engage.

#### 4. Energy and climate work in the region

##### *Presentation of current work and discussion of possible projects and community needs*

M. Valenta presented on energy projects in the region as follows:

WindowDressers- Non profit organization that helps community volunteer groups build insulating window inserts for residents, including free inserts for low-income residents (community build in November!). New to the region, sign-ups for over 250 inserts already, more volunteers needed from the islands

Methane Digester Outreach- Working with Alex DePillis from VT Agency of Agriculture to connect farmers and digester developers, disseminate resources and development info to farmers

Swanton Community Methane Digester- Submitted LOI for Rural Energy Pilot Program to develop a community methane digester in Swanton that would take food scraps from schools, businesses, and individuals and farm waste to produce reduced rate electricity for low-income residents

Green Workforce Development- Working with local tech centers to include green job training in curriculum, including solar installation, heat pump installation, green building techniques, weatherization, and other green jobs

Youth Engagement and Leadership- Working with BFA environmental club and MVU social justice club to organize and contribute to energy and climate work in the region, potentially create St. Albans Energy Committee. Spectrum Youth Center, maybe they would want to be involved, WindowDressers?

Swanton's "Let's Talk Green"- Quarterly educational talks on different green topics like heat pumps, EVs, incentives, DIY projects, etc.

Energy Fair- Possible event to display green technologies like electric mowers, heat pumps, etc, explain green services and incentives in the region, invite experts to answer questions

EV Drive Events- Swanton hosting one next month, allows people to discuss EVs with current drivers, test drive different models, and learn more about incentives. Alburgh does a car show, could integrate EVs into that.

A. Jobin-Picard makes the point that libraries are a great place to connect with communities. B. Morris wants people to know there are no incentives for electric mowers, and M. Valenta points out that gaps like this can be brought to Efficiency Vermont's attention, they are very receptive to community input.

Looking ahead: *Regional Energy Plan revisions, schedule and agendas for upcoming meetings, background materials*

C. Dimitruk says the plan is way too long and complicated because there are a lot of state requirements, but would love to see it made more accessible. B. Morris asks about chair and vice chair appointments, C. Dimitruk says it makes sense to make those appointments at the next meeting. A. Jobin Picard asks for a poll about meeting time as 6:00 might be too early. A. Voegele asks about hybrid or in person meetings, C. Dimitruk agrees that meetings of this size will definitely keep a hybrid option.

5. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:36.