



# CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC

*Communities Planning Together*

## **CCRPC Long Range Planning Committee—Energy Subcommittee**

**DATE:** Wednesday, September 21, 2016

**TIME:** 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 pm

**PLACE:** CCRPC Office, 110 West Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski, VT.

### **Attendees Present:**

Jim Donovan, Charlotte  
Keith Epstein, South Burlington  
Jeff Forward, Richmond  
Robin Pierce, Essex Junction  
Catherine McMains, Jericho  
Irene Wrenner, Essex

### **Staff Present:**

Charlie Baker, Executive Director  
Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager  
Melanie Needle, Senior Planner  
Emily Nosse-Leirer, Planner

### **1. Welcome**

No changes were proposed to the agenda.

### **2. Project Overview**

Melanie Needle gave a brief overview of the Regional Energy Planning process, including the statutory requirements for RPCs to complete energy plans, CCRPC's contract with the Department of Public Service and the project timeline, and the new provisions for substantial deference. The presentation was an abbreviated version of the PowerPoint that CCRPC staff have begun presenting to the towns; it can be found on the Regional Energy Plan page on our website.

### **3. Detailed Schedule and Brief Update on Municipal Planning Commission Meetings to Date**

Melanie Needle presented the detailed schedule for the work of the Energy Sub-Committee and the energy planning process in general (schedule document included in the packet). Charlie

Baker suggested that the October meeting also include a discussion of the Department of Public Service's draft standards, which will be released by the Department of Public Service by the end of September and will need to be finalized by November 1. The sub-committee agreed that this discussion would be valuable.

Melanie Needle discussed that CCRPC will have a chance to give feedback on the LEAP model results from VEIC in October. Keith Epstein suggested that a staff member from VEIC come to present the model results and answers questions after the model results are available.

Melanie Needle mentioned that draft siting maps have been distributed to all municipalities and CCRPC staff are going to PC meetings throughout the region to discuss municipal input on energy siting maps. Several committee members mentioned their desire to have a larger conversation about the criteria included on the maps. Charlie Baker mentioned that the Department of Public Service is continuing their conversations about what constraints should be included on the maps.

Jeff Forward mentioned that development constraints on solar and wind are different than on other developments, as agricultural soils are thought to be useable after solar projects are decommissioned. Robin Pierce mentioned that soil compaction and other development issues should still be considered for renewable development, and that any renewable development should not take away from the goal of sustaining the "Vermont Brand." Charlie Baker mentioned that many utilities have also expressed an interest in as much production as possible near loads rather than produced far away with large transmission lines.

#### **4. Discuss Staff memo on the procedure for seeking municipal input regarding constraints to renewable energy generation**

Melanie explained that the meetings CCRPC staff have had with towns over the last few weeks have made clear that there is a need for a standardized process to be determined for how towns can give feedback. When this information has been presented to towns, some towns have wondered whether they should create new policies to be included on the regional map, ex. creating scenic overlays so they will be included as constraints. CCRPC staff is of the opinion that the creation of new local regulations for this process will not be feasible give the timeline of the Regional Energy Plan, and is suggesting that the regional maps only reflect local policies that are in place or will be adopted by May 2016.

Melanie gave an overview of what has already been identified by the Department of Public Service with the Bennington RPC and ANR. Jim Donovan mentioned that the state-identified Level 1 and 2 criteria do not seem adequate. Jeff Forward asked if anyone has asked a developer whether these criteria line up with what can be financed.

The committee felt that the memo as written did not make it clear that towns can identify new

Level 1 and Level 2 constraints that have not already been identified by the state, and suggested changes in the order of the memo to make that clear.

Discussion ensued about the places in which energy generation facilities can or cannot be built. The issue of how to map conserved land came up, including that all types of conserved land have different restrictions based on how they are conserved and who conserves them and this is why they are Level 2 instead of Level 1.

The committee did not want to see the memo again before it was distributed.

#### **5. Review DRAFT FAQ**

This item was postponed.

#### **6. Next Steps**

Melanie will send a Doodle poll to determine the time and date of the next meeting.