

**Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting  
Monday, January 11, 2018  
5:00 – 7:00 pm**

**National Life Complex, Davis Building, Catamount Room (N215)  
1 National Life Drive, Montpelier**

**Remote Participation via Skype for Business:**  
<https://meet.lync.com/vermontgov-vermont/bethany.sargent/6BVKQK9W>

**Meeting Summary (Approved)**

**Committee members present:** Wayne Elliott, Bob Fischer, Lori Fisher (Chair), Sen. Ginny Lyons (online, 5:38 – 6:25 pm), David Mears, Mark Naud, Rep. Carol Ode (arrived at 5:41 pm) Denise Smith (Vice Chair; online until 6:45 pm), Jeff Wennberg

**Committee members absent:** Rep. Steve Beyor, Sen. Carolyn Branagan, Eric Clifford, James Ehlers, Alex McDonald

**Others present:** Rep. Ben Joseph (Grand Isle, arrived at 5:41 pm); Jordyn Geller (DEC)

Meeting summary by Bethany Sargent (DEC).

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

A quorum was not present, so meeting began at 5:19 with six CAC members present and one online. A quorum was reached at 5:38 pm.

**2. Public Comments**

None.

**3. Review and Vote on November 13<sup>th</sup> Draft Meeting Summary**

Wayne Elliott moved to approve the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting summary; Mark Naud seconded. Vote unanimous.

**4. 2018 Lake Champlain Action Plan (Mark Naud)**

Mark Naud reviewed VTCAC members' comments and edits to the draft action plan (four members reviewed the draft). Significant edits were discussed, including under Act 64 – to transfer enforcement authority from the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (AAFM) to the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

David Mears commented that as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner, he thought it would not be worth the investment in time and effort to shift authority from one agency to the other, that both ANR and AAFM secretaries could be held equally accountable. He described that his perspective has changed since that time.

Jeff Wennberg mentioned that he came to that perspective before he left as DEC Commissioner. He described that AAFM staff view their role as the assistance agency for farms and farmers and they were uncomfortable assuming the role of enforcement, which could jeopardize the relationship they'd established with farmers.

David Mears moved to approve the draft action plan and allow the Action Plan Working Group Co-Chairs, along with the VTCAC Chair and staff, to do the final design and layout. Ginny Lyons seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

## **5. Discuss Legislative Day (10 min)**

VTCAC members requested to testify before and or discuss the 2018 Lake Champlain Action Plan with: Senate Finance; House Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife; Senate Natural Resources and Energy; House Agriculture and Forestry; Senate Agriculture; House Finance and Institutions; House Ways and Means; House Appropriations; Senate Appropriations; House Corrections and Institutions; Speaker of the House; Senate Pro Tempore; Lt. Governor; Governor and ANR Secretary.

Lori Fisher reminded members of the need to be strategic, with as many committee members as possible participating for the full day.

David Mears suggested inviting a representative from each of the important money committees to attend a single meeting.

Rep. Ode suggested it would be important to see a diverse coalition in the room, including the business advocates, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont League of Cities and Towns that have recently endorsed the Clean Water Authority and long-term funding.

David Mears suggested that once we confirm the date and agenda VTCAC members can do outreach to those groups, so they know they are invited. Lori Fisher mentioned that if the committee decides to do this, everyone would need to make some calls. The Vermont Water Caucus and Clean Water Network groups have been updated on the VT CAC Action Plan and Lori will let them know the day we are testifying.

Wayne Elliott asked about the procedure for the Legislative Day. Would the VTCAC be presenting the whole action plan, even though some legislative committees would not support some of the issues or items on the second page? Could there be a separate date focused on funding?

Lori Fisher responded that the full action plan would be shared. The goal is to schedule testimony and meetings on a single day, but a second day could be scheduled if needed. Treasurer Pearce could be invited to the funding focused presentation if we are able to schedule just one meeting with the money committees rather than testifying to them separately.

VTCAC members discussed their availability for the Legislative Day. Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> was identified as the first choice, and Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> as the second choice.

It was noted that Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> is Clean Water Day at the State House. The event is organized by the Water Caucus, a coalition of environmental and watershed groups. The

Clean Water Authority and long-term funding for water protection will be the focus of that day.

Rep. Carol Ode asked if the 2018 Lake Champlain Action Plan could be presented at town meetings or shared with town meeting moderators.

Lori Fisher suggested that each member could do this individually, but generally that outreach would require a lot of advance work. In many towns, additional agenda items have to be pre-approved.

Rep. Ben Joseph from Grand Isle described the impact of invasive weeds at his property on Grand Isle, that his children and grandchildren could no longer swim. He described the water quality challenges in Carry Bay, Pelots Bay, and Missisquoi Bay. He mentioned the show he hosts on Channel 17 monthly, and suggested VTCAC members could come to discuss the action plan. His program, Judge Ben, is picked up by cable access stations throughout the state.

## **6. Discuss Potential Topics and Presenters for Upcoming Meetings (10 min)**

Given the Legislative Day in early February, VTCAC members decided to cancel the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The VTCAC will meet next March 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by the April 9<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup> meetings.

Bethany to send link to LCBP research conference agenda.

Bob Fischer suggested a future topic could be the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit appeals. ANR and Conservation Law Foundation staff could present their perspectives.

David Mears suggested wastewater plant infrastructure, CSO infrastructure, farm practices, restoration projects, natural infrastructure. Wastewater should be discussed in a strategic way. Revenue source and administering funding is a top priority because of the legislature's focus.

Jeff Wennberg added that we should focus on what's in front of the legislature. While he doesn't want to be completely reactive, a focus on what's relevant makes sense.

Wayne Elliott asked if it would be appropriate to invite legislators to discuss clean water funding.

Lori Fisher responded that the VTCAC has not invited legislators who are not VTCAC members. If we do, we need to be responsive to schedules, which might require meeting on a different day or time, or meeting in Montpelier.

Jeff Wennberg commented that while specific bills are constantly changing, which makes it challenging, it could also be a timely topic to address.

Wayne Elliott suggested inviting someone who could speak about the adequacy of funding, staffing for addressing nonpoint source pollution from the agricultural sector.

Lori Fisher added that it would be good to further discuss moving enforcement authority from AAFM to ANR, that Jeff Wennberg and David Mears could share their experience and ideas as part of a panel discussion.

Denise Smith suggested a focus on how economic development relates to clean water, including the need for engineering firms and workforce development.

David Mears suggested inviting the Agency of Commerce and Community Development Secretary to address this.

## **7. Staff Update (10 min) – Bethany Sargent**

### **Options for Recording VTCAC Meetings**

David Mears suggested contacting Theresa Murray-Clausen at VT Digger regarding live conferences.

### **Committee Member Terms**

Lori Fisher will reach out to VTCAC members whose terms are ending to inquire about their interest in reappointment, with a request to send a bio and statement of how they would like to contribute if they are interested in continuing to serve.

Lori asked if Bill Howland and Bob Paquin, who were suggested appointments during the last round, should be submitted again. Group members agreed that we should re-submit their names if they're interested.

Mark Naud thought there was an online form for appointments on the Governor's office website. Bethany Sargent will check on process for VTCAC member appointments.

## **8. Meeting Adjournment**

A quorum was no longer present, so the meeting did not formally adjourn.