

ENERGY - MEETING MINUTES

Who: Addison County Regional Planning Commission - Energy Committee

When: April 21st, 2026; 5:00 to 6:30 PM, EST

1. Call to Order (5:00 PM) - The meeting was called to order at about 5:00 PM by Chairperson Brinkman
2. Attending Members (5:00 PM) attendees - Chairperson Cheryl Brinkman, Melanie Sands, Tom Perry, Jeremy Grip, and ACRPC staff member Jolyon Larson were in attendance. No guests from the public were identified.
3. Approval of Agenda (5:05 PM) - The agenda was reviewed. No additions or omissions were proposed, and the agenda was accepted as presented.
4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (5:05 PM)
 1. Tom Perry moved to approve the previous meeting minutes. Melanie Sands seconded the motion.
 2. The committee identified a spelling error in a member's name in the previous minutes.
 3. The committee also briefly discussed the level of detail in the minutes. Members generally agreed that the recent minutes were useful with member Perry noting that they did a better job of capturing substantive discussion, while Chairperson Brinkman also noting that future minutes can be slightly more concise where appropriate.
 4. Action: The previous meeting minutes were approved with the identified name correction.
5. Public Comment (5:10 PM) - No public comment was recorded before the committee moved into discussion of ongoing initiatives, projects, and policies.
6. Discussion of On-going Initiatives, Projects, or Policies
 1. Update on Regional Energy Plan (5:10 PM)
 1. Submission to LURB
 1. Staff reported that the Regional Plan had been formally submitted to the Land Use Review Board process, with the relevant deadline occurring in late April and submission occurring in early May.
 2. The committee discussed that the remaining Regional Plan work is mostly limited to light edits, such as correcting titles, figure/table references, and numerical details. Staff identified

the solar canopy map as the primary remaining item that may still need additional refinement before final plan adoption.

2. June 10th Public Meeting at Full Commission Meeting
 1. The committee reviewed the schedule for the second public hearing, which is scheduled for June 10. Staff noted that substantive comments received at that hearing could require additional edits and potentially another hearing, although no major unresolved issues were expected based on the comments received to date.
 2. Staff emphasized that, if a substantive issue does arise, it should still be addressed even if doing so creates additional process steps.
3. Submission to PSD for Enhanced Energy Plan Status
 1. Staff explained that the Energy Plan cannot be formally submitted to the Department of Public Service for Enhanced Energy Plan status until it is part of an adopted Regional Plan.
 2. The anticipated sequence is that the Regional Planning Commission will consider adoption of the full Regional Plan in July, the plan will then proceed through final LURB approval, and the Energy section and related chapters will then be submitted to PSD. Staff noted that the full plan may be submitted to PSD because relevant information is also contained in the transportation and land use sections.
 3. The committee noted that PSD had already reviewed a version of the Energy Plan through a preliminary review process. Staff indicated that this pre-check reduces the likelihood of major new comments later in the process.
 4. The committee also clarified that the June 10 hearing and formal adoption process concern the full Regional Plan, not only the Energy section. The committee discussed that waiting for the full Regional Plan process to conclude before seeking Enhanced Energy Plan approval is preferable to updating and approving plan components separately.
 5. Action: Staff should continue light edits to the Regional Plan, continue refining the solar canopy map, prepare for the June 10 public hearing, and proceed toward July adoption and later PSD submission.

2. Regional Energy Fair (5:20 PM)

1. Vendor Outreach

1. The committee discussed, led primarily by Chairperson Brinkman, planning for the Regional Eco and Energy Fair, scheduled for June 13. Confirmed or expected participants included Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, CVOEO, Addison County Solid Waste, Local Motion/Walk-Bike Council, energy committee participants, Energy Navigators, Job Corps, Weybridge participants, and VPIRG.
2. Jolyon noted that the fair could include twenty vendors or participants if response rate remains what it has been. Chairperson Brinkman noted that planned demonstrations or displays include electric vehicles, e-bikes, electric lawn equipment, a portable solar panel demonstration, and a demonstration showing how an electric vehicle battery can power an appliance or other device.
3. E-bikes and electric vehicles are expected to be located near the back side of the park so that participants can test e-bikes on the nearby hill.

2. Event Advertisement

1. Posters have been completed and are being distributed. The event has been included in the Addison Independent calendar section, and it is expected to appear in the calendar of events and the summer guide. The event will also be shared through the several newsletters, ACRPC communications, Front Porch Forum, and related channels.
2. The committee discussed whether additional outreach should be directed toward parents and families. Members noted that the fair is not solely a children's event, but that food, music, raffles, and hands-on electric demonstrations help make the event more family-friendly. Possible additional outreach locations or channels included the Bixby Library, the Vergennes pool, Boys & Girls Club contacts, local community email lists, and family-oriented event listings.
3. The committee agreed to spend additional time identifying possible outreach strategies and locations.

3. Event Lead-up

1. The committee discussed final lead-up tasks, including confirming vendors, preparing a site map with booth numbers, placing booth-number flags in the park, and preparing easels

or signs at the park entrances showing the vendor list and booth locations.

2. Committee member Sand inquired about the raffle prize process. Chairperson Brinkman indicated that raffle tickets have been obtained, but that additional assistance in approaching folks to receive prizes would be welcome. The plan is to interrupt the band periodically to announce raffle prizes.
 3. Food remained an unresolved logistics item. Staff and committee members discussed possible food options, including previously contacted vendors, a Vergennes-area Jamaican food option, popcorn, and A Taste of Abyssinia. The committee noted that food vendors may be reluctant without a guaranteed number of attendees or minimum revenue.
 4. The committee identified May 28 as a practical deadline for determining whether existing food-vendor outreach is working. If no food vendor is confirmed by then, the committee may need to consider other options, including hiring a vendor.
4. Additional Event Logistics
1. The event is rain or shine, and the vendor agreement and public communications should continue to make that clear. A reminder closer to the event may be useful so that vendors and attendees remember umbrellas, tents, or canopies if needed.
 2. The committee discussed raffle-prize outreach. Members noted that the request to local businesses should emphasize that the raffle promotes local businesses and that donors can be recognized in post-event thank-you communications. Hardware stores were discussed as particularly appropriate because they connect to energy-related do-it-yourself projects. Potential prize sources discussed included Dakin Farm, Cookie Love, local hardware stores, the Middlebury Co-op, local restaurants, and other regional businesses.
 3. Committee members offered to ask around for additional raffle prizes and to coordinate with staff as prizes are secured.
 4. Jeremy Grip noted that he would not be in Vermont on June 13 and therefore would not attend the fair in person.
 5. Action: Staff and committee members should continue vendor confirmation, food-vendor follow-up, poster and

advertisement distribution, raffle-prize outreach, and final site-map/logistics preparation.

3. Municipal Energy Planning Update (5:50 PM)

1. EECBG

1. Staffer Larson reported that ACRPC received an updated grant agreement allowing the EECBG municipal energy planning cohort to expand to include Addison, Shoreham, and Weybridge. This brings the funded municipal planning cohort to nine municipalities.
2. Staff noted that the grant work should generally be wrapped up by the end of the calendar year so that PSD can complete its own grant closeout process by early 2027.
3. Staff explained that much of the most complicated work has involved regional and municipal data, mapping, and shared plan components. The cohort approach has allowed ACRPC to develop regional energy data and maps and then adapt them for individual municipalities, rather than starting from scratch for each town.
4. Staff reported that work on Leicester and New Haven has helped refine the municipal maps, data, and siting and design standards. The solar canopy mapping is also being adapted from the regional scale to the municipal scale.
5. Community Outreach and Surveys
 1. The committee discussed whether the Regional Eco and Energy Fair could be used to collect public input for municipal energy plans. A QR-code survey at the fair was discussed as a feasible option.
 2. Staff noted that a draft energy survey already exists and could be adapted for individual towns. New Haven had generally been comfortable with the existing draft, while Middlebury requested changes. Staff is currently reworking the survey and schedule for Middlebury's process.
 3. The committee discussed whether a survey should be hosted at a Vergennes table or at the regional table. Because Addison, Shoreham, and Weybridge are now part of the EECBG cohort, the regional table may be the more practical location if staff has capacity.
 4. The committee also discussed that survey work at

the fair could lead into later outreach opportunities, including possible community events in July or Vergennes Day in August.

4. CPRG

1. Staffer Larson explained that CPRG stands for Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. CPRG funding supports work with two municipalities and contributed a small amount toward the Regional Energy Plan update.

2. CPRG funding is also supporting Bristol's use of the Social Resilience Process Guide developed through the Climate Action Office. The guide is intended to help build social capacity and include people who may not traditionally be engaged in planning processes.

3. Staff noted that Bristol's whole-plan work through CPRG overlaps with its energy planning work through EECBG, creating some useful cross-pollination.

5. Starksboro

1. Staff reported that Starksboro was not included in the EECBG cohort because the town's interest was not confirmed before the relevant grant deadline.

2. Staff met with the Starksboro Energy Committee earlier in May to discuss what ACRPC could provide even without full grant-funded plan-writing support.

3. Staff expects to provide Starksboro with relevant data, descriptions of how the data were calculated, mapping support where feasible, and a model outline that identifies the sections needed for an enhanced energy plan. Starksboro would still need to format and write the plan locally.

4. The committee discussed that Starksboro can also look to other municipal enhanced energy plans for examples, while adapting the language and numbers to its own geography, data, and policy choices.

6. Action: Staff should continue EECBG and CPRG municipal planning work, adapt the municipal energy survey for use where appropriate, consider using the Regional Eco and Energy Fair for QR-code survey outreach, and provide Starksboro with data, maps, and model plan materials where feasible.

4. Solar Canopy Map Update (6:10 PM)

1. Staff reported that the UVM student solar canopy map required additional review before it could be fully incorporated into the Regional Plan. The students' work identified many useful potential sites, but some of the GIS outputs were not yet in the format needed for ACRPC's plan maps.
2. Staff explained that some road areas or other impervious surfaces appeared in the data because of how the students classified impervious surfaces and road-related features. Hannah reviewed the work and identified inconsistencies that should be corrected before the map is treated as final.
3. A draft solar canopy map has been included in the Regional Plan to preserve the planned substantive change. However, the current map is limited to identifying potential sites and does not include a formal production estimate.
4. Staff explained that production estimates provided through the student work appeared unexpectedly high. Earlier estimates had been approximately 700,000 MWh, while a later figure discussed by the students was far higher. Because of concerns about possible unit conversions, area calculations, or other methodological issues, staff did not want to include a specific MWh production estimate in the plan until the calculation can be verified.
5. Staffer Larson noted that, even if the production estimate is not yet ready, the work remains useful because it shows that there are meaningful solar canopy opportunities on already-developed or impervious sites across the region, not only in Middlebury and Vergennes.
6. Action: Staff should continue working with the GIS review comments, refine the solar canopy map, and avoid including a production estimate until the calculation and units are confirmed.

5. New Business (6:20 PM)

1. Summer Meeting Schedule

1. The committee discussed the summer meeting schedule. The next meeting was moved up to June 9 so that the committee can meet before the June 13 Regional Eco and Energy Fair.
2. The committee discussed whether to take a hiatus in July. Members generally supported a July hiatus if there is no

urgent need to meet, while recognizing that municipal energy plan reviews or other deadlines could require a meeting.

3. The committee also noted that the full Regional Planning Commission often takes an August hiatus. The committee agreed to remain flexible and assess whether a July or August meeting is needed based on municipal plan timing, Regional Plan status, and other pending work.
 4. Action: The next meeting is scheduled for June 9 at 5:00 PM. Staff and the committee will reassess the need for July or August meetings.
2. Vergennes Battery Energy Storage System Information Meeting
 1. The committee discussed an upcoming public information meeting for the proposed Vergennes battery energy storage system project. The meeting is expected to be held on June 3 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Vergennes Opera House, with Lightshift and other relevant participants expected to attend.
 2. Chairperson Brinkman reported that a public outreach representative connected to the project had contacted her about regional outreach and community information. The committee discussed the value of sharing factual information to balance rumors or misinformation circulating in the community.
 3. The committee suggested that information about the project, including a community questions and facts document, should be forwarded to the committee.
 4. The committee discussed that storage will likely remain an important regional issue now that several communities have substantial renewable generation. Members noted that battery systems already exist in some Addison County municipalities, including Panton and Middlebury, and that residential-scale battery systems appear in many municipalities through distributed generation data.
 5. The committee briefly discussed the scale of existing and proposed storage facilities. The proposed Vergennes project was described as being just under the five MW threshold and roughly comparable to some other nearby battery storage projects.
 6. Action: Chairperson Brinkman or staff should forward available informational materials about the Vergennes battery energy storage project to the committee.

3. Municipal Building Energy Improvements and BGS Revolving Loan Fund
 1. The committee briefly discussed opportunities for municipal building energy improvements, including building shell improvements, heat pumps, geothermal, and related efficiency work.
 2. Staff noted that Vermont Buildings and General Services is developing a revolving loan fund for municipal building energy projects. The initial funding pool was described as limited, but the loan program may be offered at 0% interest and could therefore support projects where energy savings help repay project costs.
 3. The committee noted that regional entities may be useful conduits for connecting municipalities with these types of funding opportunities.
 4. Action: Staff should keep track of emerging funding opportunities for municipal energy improvements and share relevant information with municipalities where appropriate.
6. Adjournment (6:27 PM) With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent. The next meeting was confirmed for June 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM, using the same virtual meeting link.