

ENERGY - MEETING MINUTES

Who: Addison County Regional Planning Commission - Energy Committee

When: June 9, 2026; 5:00 to approximately 6:11 PM, Eastern Time

Where: ACRPC Office, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, VT, with virtual attendance

1. Call to Order (approximately 5:00 PM)

- The committee convened at approximately 5:00 PM. The meeting proceeded in a hybrid format.

2. Attending Members (5:00 PM)

- Confirmed participating committee members included Chairperson Cheryl Brinkman, Melanie Sands, Tom Perry, and Rich Warren. James ("Jamie") Dayton joined after the meeting began. ACRPC staff member Jolyon Larson attended.
- Chairperson Brinkman and member Sands were physically in the same room as staff Larson. Their speech was captured in portions of the transcript under Larson's Teams-account label; specific speaker confirmations are identified below. No public attendees or public comments were identified in the discussion.

3. Approval of Agenda (approximately 5:00 PM)

- The agenda was presented. No additions were proposed, and the committee proceeded with the agenda. During initial business, Tom Perry asked about access to the agenda and meeting packet. Members discussed posting practices and the usefulness of emailing agendas and minutes with meeting announcements. Staffer Larson confirmed that he would do so in the future and explore other options for better agenda and minutes maintenance. [0:39–6:11]:

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (approximately 5:06 PM)

- The committee considered the previous meeting minutes, with a correction to identify the meeting date as May 19 rather than April 21. Melanie Sands moved approval contingent on the correction; Tom Perry seconded. The motion passed, with three affirmative participants indicated by the meeting discussion. James Dayton declined to vote because he had missed most of the previous meeting. [6:20–7:20]

5. Public Comment (approximately 5:07 PM)

- The committee opened the opportunity for public comment; no comments from members of the public were recorded.

6. Discussion of On-going Initiatives, Projects, or Policies

6.1 Regional Energy Fair Updates (approximately 5:07–5:34 PM)

- The committee reviewed preparations for the June 13 Regional Eco and Energy Fair in Vergennes. Chairperson Brinkman discussed participation, advertising, the remaining week of logistics, and event-day staffing at length.
- Staffer Larson detailed an updated participant list included CVOEO, Addison County Solid Waste Management District, Walk-Bike Council of Addison County, Energy Navigators/SIAC, an electric/hybrid vehicle display, Weybridge Energy Committee, Efficiency Vermont, SunCommon, 350 Vermont, Zero Energy Now, Green Mountain Power, Pioneer Mechanical, Tri-Valley Transit, ACRPC, Vergennes participants, Northlands Job Corps, and Maple Broadband. He estimated approximately 18 booths/vendors, subject to final confirmation. Chairperson Brinkman detailed Weybridge's Energy Committee participation: demonstration possibilities included e-bikes, electric vehicles, solar equipment, lawn and garden equipment, and pollinator-related exhibits.
- Chairperson Brinkman provided information on Vergennes Public Works role, that they were expected to supply parking cones, additional trash receptacles, a street barricade/sign, and arrangements to leave a portion of the park unmowed for the Weybridge display. Additional recycling stations and portable toilet service were discussed. Parking spaces needed to be reserved Friday evening; the street closure could occur Saturday morning.
- Staffer Larson confirmed that a final site map showing booth placements and vendor names/numbers would be completed as confirmations stabilized, potentially as late as the event morning. The

Vergennes Energy Committee planned a Thursday evening coordination meeting; committee help with Friday preparations was tentatively discussed for approximately 4:00 PM. Event-day setup was expected to begin around 9:00 AM.

- Chairperson Brinkman confirmed that food-vendor efforts had not secured a participant. Members discussed prioritizing food earlier in future fair planning, possibly approaching farmers-market vendors. Music and a raffle remained part of the event. Prizes or potential donations from the Middlebury Co-op, Agway, Cookie Love, Dakin Farm, local hardware stores, restaurants, and participating organizations were discussed. Direct written acknowledgments to donors were suggested in addition to public recognition.
- Staffer Larson and Chairperson Brinkman confirmed that advertising had appeared in local print/summer publications, Front Porch Forum, and posters. Volunteer coverage was discussed, and committee member Sands agreed to provide mid-event assistance to help manage raffle announcements and visitor/vendor coordination considered particularly valuable.
- It was confirmed that the fair was expected to proceed rain or shine.
- Action: Complete vendor and booth confirmations, site map/signage, raffle donations and donor acknowledgments, Friday parking and site preparations, and Saturday event staffing.

6.2 Update on Regional Energy Plan (approximately 5:34–5:42 PM)

- Staffer Larson articulated the components of H.940 and its reported implications for the regional and municipal planning approval process, including public comment handling and enhanced energy plan submission/pre-review.
- The committee discussed the need to hold another substantive public hearing on July 8 at the full Commission meeting at which they would be seeking approval of the regional plan rather than at the June 10 meeting. Remaining changes to the energy plan were described largely as non-substantive editorial corrections, including figure labels and formatting.
- The committee discussed forwarding energy-plan public comments and responses to the Department of Public Service (PSD) as part of the enhanced energy planning determination process after regional plan adoption. One substantive public comment, attributed to a member of Middlebury's energy committee, concerned natural gas infrastructure and the region's decarbonization objectives. The committee discussed the concern and constraints on excluding connections to existing gas service. Comments were rendered by several committee members regarding the need to decarbonize to meet our energy goals, and that infrastructure investment in fossil fuel resources could undermine those goals. Staff Larson mentioned that Middlebury and other municipalities are currently working on their energy plans and that they could adopt more strict recommendations on this topic.
- A draft PSD submission memorandum and standards checklist had already been prepared during preliminary review and could be adapted for formal submission.
- Tom Perry asked about potential extensions of municipal plan expiration dates. Staffer Larson responded by describing a separate pending bill, identified tentatively in the meeting as S.325, that might extend certain deadlines to December 2027. The bill number, applicability, and enactment status were not independently verified for these minutes.
- Action: Prepare for the July 8 full-Commission hearing/adoption consideration; finalize editorial corrections and the PSD submission materials following adoption.

6.3 Municipal Energy Planning Update: EECBG and CPRG (approximately 5:43–5:50 PM)

- Staffer Larson reported that the Leicester Planning Commission was expected to vote on its municipal and enhanced energy plan that evening, while the New Haven Planning Commission had voted on its draft. Selectboard review, public hearings, and subsequent regional review were discussed, with anticipated schedules extending into July or August.
- The committee considered coordinating review of Leicester's combined municipal plan with the ACRPC Local Government Committee rather than conducting isolated reviews. Tom Perry supported joint consideration to ensure consistency across plan goals. Members expressed a preference for coordinating reviews, without recording a formal vote. New Haven's stand-alone enhanced energy component would be reviewed through the Energy Committee.

- In response to Tom Perry’s question about funding for the energy planning, staff described the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) as supporting enhanced energy planning for a nine-municipality cohort, and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) as supporting regional and municipal planning and additional Bristol-related work. No major new grant developments were reported.
- Action: Coordinate a potential joint review of Leicester’s plan with the Local Government Committee and monitor Leicester and New Haven municipal adoption timelines.

6.4 Solar Canopy Map Update (approximately 5:50–5:53 PM)

- Staffer Larson noted that the Regional solar canopy map remained under refinement for the regional plan, with GIS cleanup underway. Staff noted uncertainty about whether defensible electricity generation estimates would be ready for the regional plan. At minimum, the mapping was expected to identify promising canopy locations; municipality-level applications and potential later generation estimates remained under consideration.
- Action: Continue GIS validation and use verified canopy-site information while withholding unverified production estimates.

7. New Business

7.1 July/August Meeting Schedule (approximately 5:53–5:56 PM)

- Staffer Larson suggested the notion of not having a committee meeting in July of 2026. Members generally favored not holding a July committee meeting unless new business required one. An August meeting was retained tentatively to debrief the fair and prepare for municipal plan reviews. The agenda listed August 17; during discussion, participants questioned this and agreed it should read August 18, 2026, from 5:00 to 6:30 PM. Confirm the corrected date before publication.
- The committee was asked to review the PSD municipal enhanced energy plan standards in preparation for evaluating upcoming municipal plans. Staff offered to distribute the standards to members.
- Action: Circulate the municipal enhanced energy plan standards; confirm the August meeting date and prepare for energy fair debrief and municipal plan review.

7.2 Vergennes Battery Energy Storage Proposal (approximately 5:56–6:10 PM)

- Members discussed a recent public information meeting concerning a proposed battery energy storage system in Vergennes associated with Lightshift. Chairperson Brinkman led the conversation about the community meeting and described public concern over siting, insufficient early community engagement, presentation logistics, safety, decommissioning, and compatibility with local land-use and enhanced energy plans. Alternative locations reportedly were being explored, but no relocation decision was established.
- Tom Perry emphasized the usefulness of early community input and of identifying trusted, constructive voices to help parties move toward workable solutions. Members also discussed how formally adopted local plans and state siting procedures could affect review of the project.
- No committee motion or position on the proposed project was recorded.

8. Adjournment (approximately 6:11 PM)

- The meeting concluded at approximately 6:11 PM after final remarks regarding the June 13 fair. Chairperson Brinkman adjourned the meeting with unanimous consent.