

Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday, November 13, 2017
5:00 – 7:00 pm

Shelburne Town Offices, Meeting Room 1
Shelburne, VT

Meeting Summary (Approved)

Committee members present: Eric Clifford, Wayne Elliott, Bob Fischer, Lori Fisher (Chair), Sen. Ginny Lyons, Mark Naud, Rep. Carol Ode, Jeff Wennberg

Committee members absent: Rep. Steve Beyor, Sen. Carolyn Branagan, James Ehlers, Alex MacDonald, David Mears, Denise Smith (Vice Chair)

Others present: Gail and Richard Butz, Jordyn Geller (ECO AmeriCorps, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation – DEC), Cary Giguere (Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets – AAFM), Laura Hallowell (Lake Champlain Basin Program – LCBP), Eugene Heyerdahl, Crea Lintilhac, Jackie McMakin, Nat Shambaugh (retired, AAFM), Cindy Ulmer, Ron Ulmer, Christine Vatovec (University of Vermont – UVM), Rev. Nancy Wright

Meeting summary by Bethany Sargent (DEC).

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:05. Introductions were made around the room.

2. Public Comments

Richard Butz described an event at Ascension Lutheran Church on how to talk to our legislators about clean water, planned for December 4th. Speakers include representatives of the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and the Lake Champlain Committee (LCC). The event is intended to energize the community to get involved in clean water issues.

Bob Fischer voiced his concerns about CLF's appeal of several wastewater treatment facility permits. This will be discussed in greater detail at a future VTCAC meeting. Bob Fischer will follow-up with Bethany Sargent to clarify his talking points.

3. Guest Presentations

Presentations will be posted <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/committees/citizen-advisory-committees/vermont-cac/>. Questions and answers during the presentations are listed below each presenter, with questions following all the presentations at the end. During the meeting, the chair checked in with attendees and CAC members agreed to extend the length of the meeting to allow for full presentations and Q and A and to discuss attendance issues.

Dr. Christine Vatovec, Research Affiliate and Lecturer, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources; Adjunct Research Assistant Professor, University of Vermont College of Medicine, presented on Pharmaceuticals in the Lake Champlain Basin. Dr. Vatovec described the key lessons learned through their study: (1) physicians do not have enough time to do much more than write prescriptions because of such short appointment

times; (2) there could be better use of alternative treatments; (3) we need to work to change consumer behavior, both in how consumers purchase and dispose of pharmaceuticals.

Q [Mark Naud]: Did the pharmaceuticals change when the students left?

Q [Dr. Christine Vatovec]: Yes.

Q [Lori Fisher]: For those who said they took pharmaceuticals to the landfill for disposal did they do anything to deactivate the medicines?

A [Dr. Christine Vatovec]: We did not ask that question.

Q [Laura Hollowell]: Do pharmacists give out disposal information?

A [Dr. Christine Vatovec]: Some do, but they could use help with messaging.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: When measurements were taken – what are the units?

A [Dr. Christine Vatovec]: Parts per trillion.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: Where were samples collected?

A [Dr. Christine Vatovec]: From treated effluent, before it is diluted in the lake.

Cary Giguere, Pesticide Management Section Chief, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets presented on pesticide regulation in Vermont.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: Can all classes be bought on the internet?

A [Cary Giguere]: Only class B and class C.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: Can you give an example of a Pesticide General Permit (PGP)?

A [Cary Giguere]: The Aquatic Nuisance Control Permit is covered under the PGP. In general, the PGP only prevents civil lawsuits.

Nat Shambaugh, Retired Chemist, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets presented an overview of organic contaminants in the Lake Champlain Basin.

Nat Shambaugh mentioned that the report he authored for the Lake Champlain Basin Program – Technical Report #85 – is posted at http://www.lcbp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/85_Organic-Contaminants-of-Emerging-Concern-in-the-Lake-Champlain-Basin.pdf.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: Is diethyl phthalate included in shampoos or conditioners? Or in containers?

A [Nat Shambaugh]: It could be in both.

Q [Mark Naud]: Is the difference in loading of metolachlor and atrazine related to differences in pesticide regulations?

A [Cary Giguere]: It has more to do with the difference in cropping – more corn is grown in Vermont, in Quebec there is a greater diversity of crops.

Q [Lori Fisher]: Does atrazine select for cyanobacteria instead of green algae?

A [Nat Shambaugh]: LCBP asked that question, but couldn't find any conclusive evidence.

Q [Sen. Ginny Lyons]: Christine recommended changing human behavior. Do we have the same conclusion?

A [Nat Shambaugh]: Certainly. Change the behavior; change what's being used. AAFM and the Department of Health are critical for communicating the impacts of what's being used. We need to consider the operation of sewage treatment plants and improve how we track pesticide use. We don't know what people are actually using in Vermont.

Bethany Sargent to share Nat Shambaugh's 2017 legislative proposal with VT CAC members.

Questions and Answers for All Presenters

Lori Fisher asked the presenters to consider any recommendations they may have for the CAC for the Lake Champlain Action Plan or next steps for the committee as a conduit for public information.

Q [Mark Naud]: What's the biochemistry happening in a wastewater treatment plant that would affect how well some of these things are removed?

A [Bob Fischer]: Bacteria uptake certain things and not others. Other things glom on to the solids. Some of these compounds are mostly treatable at the research level.

A [Jeff Wennberg]: There is a significant amount that we still don't understand. There is quite an array of compounds and we're just starting to learn how they behave in the environment. Some of them may be of no consequence. We're trying to figure out what we need to be most concerned about. We need to think about both prevention and treatment. If human beings require pharmaceuticals to deal with health problems and they end up in the waste stream, then treatment may be the only means of keeping these compounds out of the environment.

Q [Mark Naud]: Can you comment on specific staffing needs within AAFM for pesticide regulation?

A [Carey Giguere]: The legislature's and governor's current priority is water quality. We've reduced staffing in the pesticide program to have a more robust water quality program.

4. Review and Vote on August 14th and September 11th, October 16th Draft Meeting Summaries

Rep. Carol Ode moved to approve the August 14th (with the change in Mark Naud's arrival time), September 11th, and October 16th meeting summaries; Wayne Elliott seconded. Vote unanimous.

5. Committee Member Attendance

Lori Fisher asked how it would be best to move forward with this issue, given that we've struggled to have a quorum at several meetings. What is the standard we hold ourselves to?

Sen. Lyons mentioned she will send two corrections to her attendance records to Bethany Sargent. She went on to say that we should expect a quorum at every meeting.

Rep. Ode suggested that each committee member have another member that they call. She added that committee members should have the option to participate remotely, which would include voting. She gave Facebook Live Stream as an example. She asked what the repercussions are for chronic absences.

Mark Naud responded that we don't have a specific governance structure, only guidance documents, which state that committee members are expected to attend 75% of meetings. Half of the committee members' terms are up in February 2018.

Lori Fisher mentioned it's important for all CAC members to do a self-evaluation and ask, do I have the time to commit?

Jeff Wennberg suggested proposing to change the regular meeting day to a different day of the week through a Doodle poll. Mark Naud responded that the committee had explored the day of week and the meeting location.

Bob Fischer mentioned that 50% attendance seemed reasonable.

Sen. Lyons mentioned this would be better to add to the agenda when we have 10 or 12 committee members present.

Eric Clifford felt that if you're not at 50%, committee members should rethink their commitment. Committee members have an obligation, and it's not inappropriate to ask for others' commitment.

Jeff Wennberg asked what could be done to encourage attendance.

Lori Fisher reiterated that it's been a chronic issue and has been getting worse. Can there be directives from committee about parameters?

Sen. Lyons suggested starting with the attendance notice.

Lori Fisher stated that this is a body that requires physical presence at meetings.

Wayne Elliott mentioned that Monday and Tuesday nights are tough because of selectboard hearings.

Additional suggestions included:

- Sending a meeting reminder one to two weeks in advance
- Encourage an informal buddy system – committee members could call one another as reminders
- Consider changing the meeting time and length

By early in the new year, Lori Fisher and Denise Smith will reach out to committee members about the expectation that they attend 75% of the meetings.

The next meeting is December 11th and will be dedicated to the action plan. Meeting ended at 7:40 pm.