

**Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee (VTCAC) on
Lake Champlain's Future**

Monday, January 14, 2019, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

**Shelburne Town Offices, Meeting Room 1
5420 Shelburne Road, Shelburne**

APPROVED MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Members Present: Eric Clifford, Wayne Elliott, Bob Fischer (arrived at 5:15 pm), Lori Fisher, Bill Howland, David Mears, Mark Naud, Rep. Carol Ode, Jeff Wennberg

Committee Members Absent: Sen. Ginny Lyons

Public Guests: Linda Patterson (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Crea Lintilhac (Water Caucus), Thea Wurzburg (Rep. Welch's office)

Meeting summary by Bethany Sargent, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

5:00 – 5:20 pm

- 1. Welcome and introductions**
- 2. Review and vote on October 3rd and November 26th Meeting Summaries**

Wayne Elliott moved to approve October 3rd and November 26th Draft Meeting Summaries; Mark Naud seconded. Vote unanimous.

- 3. Make final copy edits and vote on 2019 Lake Champlain Action Plan**

Mark Naud explained that keeping the action plan length reasonable is always a challenge. His edits focused on streamlining the language and framing priorities through an economic lens. He reviewed the draft action plan section by section, focusing on his revisions and other VTCAC members' edits. Questions and comments are bulleted below.

- Wayne Elliott asked if Sen. Bray would be proposing a per parcel fee as he did last year.
- David Mears described the Clean Water Redesign proposal the administration had drafted. It is a new system for allocating clean water funds. The state would give allocations to municipalities to spend and in return, through a district or regional collaboration, would reduce nutrient pollution by an agreed upon amount. For example, Shelburne would get a grant, pool funds with adjoining communities to address stormwater pollution, with flexibility as to how. Targets would be set based on contribution as determined by modelling. They could also draw funds from other sources.
- Jeff Wennberg thought the system wouldn't work. He said the draft he had seen was not informed by the title and Vermont statutes that govern municipal law. There is a huge disconnect that would need to be corrected and that the current system based on watersheds instead of political boundaries made a lot more sense. Under the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Loads, there are targets associated with each lake segment and its associated watershed. Assigning targets based on political boundaries with significant consequences for failure to meet targets is unworkable.
- David Mears mentioned the VTCAC advocated for a Clean Water Authority last year. He expressed a need for coordinated statewide action, and if there's not trust in the state, it's better to move to a municipal level, but regardless, the state needs to play an active role in this, and the legislature needs the administration to be a full and engaged partner.
- Jeff Wennberg stated the idea of devolving reduction and funding is a good idea, but the administration started with one model and then moved to another that wasn't workable.

- Bill Howland mentioned their comments resonated, and that if the VTCAC is unaware of the administration's or legislature's initiatives, then we're unable to influence them. He thought the VTCAC should go back to their charge and to make the action plan stronger. He didn't see the VTCAC's priorities clearly enough.
- Lori Fisher asked Bill if he edited the document directly with his recommendations for stronger language. Bill agreed to resend what he had drafted before.
- Mark Naud described that the action plan had been very prescriptive in the past and ended up not being relevant as the conversation evolved. Other times, it's been broader to allow for the VTCAC to be more opportunistic.
- Bill Howland mentioned he wanted to see a greater focus on municipal waste management, including a reduction in Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) events, and reducing pollution from agricultural sector – the state must address some fundamental problems with the current economic model that favors industrial scale farming.
- David Mears suggested the VTCAC view the action plan as just one of their outreach tools. Others include hosting public meetings, providing ample notice for them, and testifying before the legislature.
- Rep. Ode suggested she could take a more active role to craft bills with Legislative Council that the VTCAC would support.
- Jeff Wennberg reiterated that the action plan is a statement of principles and is not prescriptive.
- Lori Fisher emphasized that it's important to recognize the VTCAC is primarily an all-volunteer body and does not have the capacity to have a continual presence in the legislature.
- Bill Howland asked why the VTCAC is not proposing a tax on phosphorus that enters the basin?
- David Mears suggested adding a section on developing a new agricultural model, as one of biggest impediments to change for farmers is the substantial investments they've made in the current system.
- Eric Clifford commented the same conversations are happening throughout the country.
- Bill Howland added the general fund should support lake and river access areas.

Mark Naud and Bill Howland to revise action plan by Wednesday, January 16th; VTCAC members to send final comments by Monday, January 21st at 9:00 am to Lori, Mark, and Bethany.

David Mears moved to adopt the 2019 Lake Champlain Action Plan draft, with final edits and formatting to be made by Lori Fisher, Mark Naud, and Bethany Sargent; Jeff Wennberg seconded. Vote unanimous.

4. Identify potential dates for Legislative Day and discuss future meeting topics to advance action plan priorities

February 6th, 12th and 13th (Tuesdays or Wednesdays in early- to mid-February) were suggested as potential dates for Legislative Day and a public forum on the action plan. Bethany Sargent will poll VTCAC members and inquire about Secretary and Governor's availability.

The public forum would be held at the State House, 4:00 – 6:00 pm, ideally on the same day as the Legislative Day.

- David Mears suggested that the VTCAC members present the action plan.
- A panel would be invited to present a range of perspectives: Julie Moore (Agency of Natural Resources Secretary), Jon Groveman (Vermont Natural Resources Council), Tom Torti (Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce), Representative of Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Vermont Digger could moderate.
- A separate business meeting could be held in conjunction with the public forum, as was done in Burlington October 3rd.

Other action plan priorities to address at future meetings were suggested:

- Recreation: Louis Porter, Fish and Wildlife Department Commissioner and Mike Snyder, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation Commissioner; Location: Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center Big Ed Classroom

- Agriculture and Water Quality: David Mears to send names to Lori, Mark and Bethany; Eric Clifford will consider venue options.

5. Discuss potential VTCAC nominees and identify next steps

Wayne Elliott and David Mears will report on suggested VTCAC nominees at the March meeting. Bill Howland asked if we can consider individuals who do not live in the watershed. Bob Fischer responded that their location should be considered as a factor in their nomination.

Bob Fischer moved to adjourn; Eric Clifford seconded. Meeting adjourned.