

April 16, 2025 CAST Minutes

Present: Dana Clawson; Staff, John Reid, Lee Michaelides, Jen Durgin, Beth Malow, Laura Simon, Public: Nadim Kassir

Approved the minutes of March 2025:

Coordinator's Report: Dana briefed the SB on the downtown geothermal district. There is corporate interest (Eco-Smart Solutions) in the project if the new Coolidge building becomes a customer. VermontGas has interest in managing the project upon completion. Primary sticking point is financing to demolish the existing hotel and purchase the empty lot. Laura is the volunteer coordinator for window dressers. Still need a food coordinator. TBD tour of the White River waste waterplant.

Styrofoam: Had 40 volunteers and 200 cars show up to fill 3- 26 foot trucks at the recent collection. Will need additional funding for future collections because of the need to purchase additional super sacks. Jen has researched grants from New England Grass Roots Fund and Seed Grants as sources of outside funding.

Changes to State Climate Action Plan: John participated in an open meeting host by Department of Natural Resources. A lot of momentum behind preserving the forests with changes to current use and biodiversity. Continue to encourage development of villages with water and sewer. Vermont leads the nation on a per-capita basis in the installation of heat pumps. There is as support for a program called Cap and Invest. Idea is that excessive discharges of carbon dioxide will be taxed and the proceeds will be invested in carbon reduction programs. Jen reported on the future of the Vermont Climate Council given the political climate of the Scott administration. There also efforts to change the charter to Efficiency Vermont with a focus on reducing carbon dioxide emissions rather than reducing the use of electricity— since there are statewide efforts to replace burning fuel with electricity.

Public Comment: Nadim Kassir reported on the challenges posed by the next generation of heat pumps because of the new refrigerant used in them. One issue is that the current heat pumps won't be repairable in 11 years because the current refrigerant will stop being made. That is something the town needs to consider as it installs new heat pumps.

Thermal Cameras: Motion made and passed to purchase 4 thermal camera for the town's libraries for residents who have an interest in DIY weatherization projects.

Special Meeting of CAST of April 30: Discussion will focus on the building and transportation chapters of the town's climate action plan.