

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Meeting Minutes of August 28, 2024

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held in person at the MARC Offices in Ascutney and remotely over Zoom.

Attendance

TAC Members Present: Kristi Morris, Springfield; Peter Hudkins, Chester; Ray Stapleton, Weathersfield; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Sharon Bixby, Ludlow (via Zoom); Diane Foulds, Windsor (via Zoom).

Others Present: Logan Nicoll, MARC; Abe Koffman, VTrans (via Zoom); Christine Howe, SEVT (via Zoom)

Kristi Morris called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

1. Welcome and introductions

All present members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Changes to the agenda

Logan advised the expected guests from VTrans and Green Mountain Power could not make it so we would not be getting the presentation about the Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Program.

Ray said he had received an email from Martha [Martha Harrison, MARC] about an electric vehicle grant that might be worth discussing in place of that.

3. Acceptance of July 24 minutes

Peter Hudkins made a motion to approve minutes as presented. Seconded by Wayne Wheelock. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Updates from the VTrans Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Program

Kristi noted the agenda item has changed to Electric Vehicle Grants.

Ray talked about a new grant available from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to replace vehicles or equipment and advised people to contact Martha Harrison of MARC if they are interested.

Logan said he was planning to do outreach to our towns and town highway crews on this as well. The program is not open yet, but DEC expects to begin accepting applications this fall. The program is funded from the Volkswagen Settlement funds.

Ray asked what types of entities would be eligible to apply.

Logan said it was open to everyone who uses these types of vehicles.

Logan talked about a solar company he had been in touch with that has designed a solar-powered electric vehicle charging system. They are leasing their system at a rate such that towns could use their MERP grant (Municipal Energy Resilience Program) to pay for the system for a whole year. It is an interesting system because it provides charging during the day, depending on the sun, but requires no connection to the grid.

Diane asked what speed the system was capable of charging vehicles.

Logan said it is based on the sun because there is not a substantial battery, but could charge up to 7 kilowatts which would be shared between the four chargers.

Ray asked about EV battery recycling programs and if there was a plan for what to do with old batteries, and training for safe storage and handling of batteries.

Logan said there are conversations beginning about planning for recycling, but they have not been fully fleshed out. Because batteries typically last at least 10 years we are early in the cycle for have a significant mass of batteries to recycle.

Ray talked about training for local/volunteer fire departments for how to handle situations involving EVs. Logan said he would connect with the people that were supposed to present tonight to try to add that discussion to the agenda when they reschedule.

The committee discussed other programs and initiatives they've heard about recently.

5. Review and Adopt Bylaws Amendment

Logan said he had made some changes from those originally warned in consultation with others at MARC.

Kristi asked about the process, when can we adopt the new bylaws.

Logan said because there are changes from the bylaws in the original warning for this meeting we will need to warn them for adoption at our next meeting.

The committee discussed what the committee should be named.

Logan walked through the changes proposed from the original draft.

The committee discussed the function of the At-Large Members and wording for the section that deals with at-large and ex-officio members, and discussed recruiting members to represent rail and aviation.

Logan said much of the bylaws were an attempt to codify existing practice and simply have in writing the way the board has operated. However, one way in which these bylaws would be a change is allowing At-Large Members to vote on action items. They would still not count towards a quorum, so they can't meet and vote on items without a quorum of Town Representative members.

The committee discussed giving At-Large Members a vote.

Logan said one of the main reasons the TAC initially started reviewing the bylaws was because the existing bylaws effectively made a quorum five members and for a few months the TAC was unable to get five regular members to show up. That is another change included here, that a quorum would simply be four Town Representative members.

The committee discussed the compliance with the Open Meeting Law and recent changes by the legislature.

The committee agreed to move forward with current draft of the bylaws for now and will review a clean copy without any markup at the next meeting.

6. Review and Adopt MARC Title VI Plan

Logan has been working on this for some time and has already submit it through VTrans for review by their civil rights attorneys. The MARC is required by the federal government to have a Title VI plan because they deal with federal money. The changes in the plan are relatively minor, mostly updating job titles and naming the Title VI Coordinator.

The committee discussed the process and timeline.

Peter Hudkins made a motion to adopt the Title VI Plan without change. Seconded by Diane Foulds. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Review and Adopt SS4A Resolution

Peter said he is concerned about the language and the implication of safety at all costs that does not take into account overall sustainability or resiliency.

The committee discussed that issue and whether that was excluded by or simply omitted from the existing language.

Logan went through the other changes in the draft from what was initially sent out.

Peter asked what Vision Zero is and where that is defined.

Ray said is essentially Vision Zero is focused on traffic accidents and road safety.

Logan talked about the background of the resolution and why there is a need for this to be adopted as part of MARC's ongoing effort to create a comprehensive safety action plan with a goal of zero roadway deaths.

Ray talked about the origins of Vision Zero and what it is and where the program came from.

Logan talked about the Vision Zero language in the resolution that defines what Vision Zero is.

Peter asked about including resiliency in one of the Vision Zero clauses of the resolution.

The committee discussed where the resiliency language would go and what would be gained by adding it. The committee decided to amend language to call attention to flood resiliency and its relationship to road safety.

Logan said a change in this proposal is making the date 2050 as opposed to 2040.

Ray said one of his biggest concerns in this space is data collection about accidents, and they don't always capture the location of the accidents very well when they occur outside of an intersection because the location collection is nearest-intersection based.

The committee talked about the process of adopting this and that they would recommend this to the MARC Board of Commissioners to adopt.

Logan talked about post-crash care and that an important component of this plan that he found surprising was how they highlight post-crash care as so important to this process.

8. Other Business

The committee discussed next steps with VHB and the comprehensive safety action plan development process.

9. Future agenda items & next meeting date

Peter asked about recruiting more At-Large members.

There was a discussion about filling out the At-Large membership.

10. Adjourn

Wayne Wheelock made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Peter Hudkins. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.