

October 27, 2025 – DRAFT MINUTES

**Attending:** Perry Sawyer, Heidi Henkel, Sam Loch, Michael Fairchild, Andy White, Jim Calchera, Kathy Urffer

**Agenda:**

- Need to approve the April 2025 minutes.
  - Moved by Heidi Henkel. Seconded by Jim Calchera. All in favor. Sam Lock abstained.
- Vernon solar proposal:
  - Environmental Notice Bulletin:
    - Stormwater Runoff from Construction Sites General Permit 3-9020 (CGP) for Moderate Risk Projects: PN25.0046830; 9963-9020; contact Bryce Mckim; [Bryce.McKim@vermont.gov](mailto:Bryce.McKim@vermont.gov); 802-272-9428
    - Notice of Intent: For Operational Stormwater Discharges; General Permit 3-9050; PN25.0048251; 9963-9050; contact Scott Tobias; [Scott.Tobias@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Tobias@vermont.gov)
    - Norma Manning - from Vernon Conservation Commission has been involved. Reach out to the Conservation Commission: <https://vernonvt.org/conservation-commission/>
  - Issues of concern:
    - It is currently being farmed. Michael spoke to Judy Miller (husband is Art). Judy is a town lister. Her understanding is that nothing can happen because it is prime ag land. Written in the Town Plan that you can not develop ag land. Michael had a phone conversation with Peter Miller. Miller Farm is farming the property. Peter's understanding is that the land can't be developed.
    - All agree that farm land should not be transformed for Solar.
    - Heidi visited the site and there is a great biodiversity of trees. Also the wetland and ravine are a special ecological place. Trees are holding the soil in place.

- Jim Calchera **moves to elect Heidi and Mike to draft and submit comment letter** from the Committee to strongly oppose converting farmland to solar and include concerns about loss of trees and potential impact to the wetland due to bank destabilization due to increased run-off from impervious surfaces. Kathy seconded.
  - Motion includes the follow up action to share the draft with the rest of the committee for approval and then send final comment to the VT permit managers listed above and the Public Utility Commission.
  - All in favor; no opposed; no abstentions.
- Putney, VT wetlands permit

Kathy Urffer stopped recording minutes, and Heidi Henkel did her best to record minutes after that. The following is minutes written by Heidi.

- We talked about concerns about the driveway going through the wetland and where the house and garage will be and where the septic will be and possible impact of putting fill in the wetland to make the driveway less muddy, on the next neighbor downstream who has a small culvert to let the stream pass under their driveway, as well as their driveway being muddy anyway because it looks like they're hitting the water table when trying to make the driveway. Discussion about whether the driveway is in the wetland- it is. Lack of contours on the map in the application- it's informative to look at the site- it's on a hill. Discussion about which is the main dwelling. Discussion about site visits and not going on the property because of the no trespassing sign, but looking at it from the road gave a lot of information.
- We were given a name and phone number and email address for who to contact with concerns about this permit application.

Kathy Urffer left the meeting.

### **We talked more about the permit application in Vernon:**

Soil survey book- old- has information about soil quality in Vernon - 1987

When it flooded and they dredged the dam, they dumped all the soil onto that field

Scraping off and stockpiling soil and respreading it after they decommission the solar field, is in the permit- Various people didn't see that

the uniqueness of the soil- it is as good as it can get

In the 1990s it won awards- various soil tests from Vernon

Camping site for the portage

People have all kinds of cookouts

Great River Hydro started storing stuff in that building

A lot of foxes and deer in that field

Look down in the gully from the Governor Hunt Rd, does and bucks and fawns

It's totally different from everything around it. It's a special and unique environment.

**We talked more about the Putney permit:**

we're going to deal with it individually and not as a commission

Construction is ongoing despite not having permits- they seem to be planning to build it and pay a fine, and assuming they will be awarded the permit without modifying their plan

They put the driveway in in the past couple of weeks,

Something is screwy about it

**Motion to adjourn**