

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee
March 17, 2016**

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Select Board; Carol Chamberlin, Planning Commissioner

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner

Warren: Bob Ackland, Select Board; Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner

CVRPC: Laurie Emery; Bonnie Waninger

Sugarbush: Margo Wade

Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

MRVDP: Joshua Schwartz; Dara Torre

Others: Chuck Martel, Fayston Select Board; John Hoogenboom, Moretown Select Board; Robert Cook, Waitsfield; Will Flender, Laura Brines, Besty Jondro, Mad River Path Association (MRPA)

Mad River Path Association Update: W. Flender, L. Brines and B. Jondro were in attendance to provide the steering committee with a staff transition and project update. W. Flender began by highlighting several active projects, including the Waitsfield Elementary School path, which he expects will be completed over the summer. The project was delayed by a requirement to conduct an historical preservation survey of the area before construction. The boardwalk in Irasville needs to be rebuilt as the hemlock used previously was prone to rot. Funding is in place to complete the repairs. The McCullough bridge in Fayston collapsed into the brook. Fortunately, the MRPA received assistance from Fayston's Natural Resource Committee to rebuild it using steel beams next winter. W. Flender anticipates that project will cost \$20,000. He also provided an update on the Sugarbush Access Road scoping study. The study will explore options for a path from Eurich Road to Inferno Road, approximately 1 mile in length. The study will assess both sides of the road to determine the best options, and will provide rough cost estimates. B. Ackland added that the Warren Select Board has reached out to Steve Gladczuk of the CVRPC for assistance with preparation of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the study. A review committee will be assembled to include representatives from the Warren Select Board, Planning Commission and Sugarbush. L. Brines next updated the group about Will's departure from the MRPA after four years. The board will be running ads for a part-time executive director and a part-time trail manager. It is possible one candidate could apply for both positions. L. Brines noted that there is a lot of momentum in the Valley right now around trails. J. Schwartz added that more of the responsibility for the MRV Moves active recreation planning process would now shift to the MRVDP as the project has evolved into more of a policy and management phase. MRPA will continue its involvement with the effort. Everyone shared their appreciation for Will's leadership over the years, and wished him well in his new endeavors.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 18, 2016 Steering Committee were accepted as written, with one small correction (change town of residence for Bob Cook to Waitsfield).

Town Meeting Report-Out: B. Ackland reported that Warren's meeting was quite tame and short this year. J. Cadwell said Fayston's meeting was focused on celebrating outgoing Select Board member Bob Vasseur. He also noted that although the Select Board in Fayston had elected not to increase funding to the Recreation District, they would now be doing so in accordance with Warren and Waitsfield, who approved the increase. J. Cadwell suggested the budget discussion and process be clarified in the future at the multi-town select board meeting. S. Shea noted that Waitsfield's town meeting included a motion to de-fund the MRVDP, which was widely rejected. He clarified a statement he made that appeared in a recent Valley Reporter article about MRVDP's funding.

Annual Election of Officers: B. Ackland expressed his interest in remaining as Chair; J. Sanford likewise volunteered to stay on as Vice-Chair. After some clarification, it was suggested that Treasurer and Secretary be combined as described in the articles of agreement. B. Ackland had formerly been acting Treasurer. C. Chamberlin offered to serve as Secretary/Treasurer. J. Cadwell moved to approve the officer positions as proposed, P. MacLaren seconded. So voted. J. Schwartz said that L. Emery has been acting as the ex officio representative for CVRPC as well as providing administrative support for the MRVPD with finances, etc. Going forward, in light of L. Emery's retirement, the ex officio seat will now be held by CVRPC's new planner, Eric Vorwald; he will not be taking minutes. Some discussion ensued about who would take that on, and whether someone could be hired to do MRVPD's minutes. The CVRPC will continue to provide back-office accounting assistance.

Laurie Emery Appreciation: L. Emery was thanked for her work over the years, and good wishes for her retirement expressed. J. Schwartz noted his 13-year long working relationship with Laurie, who has resided in the MRV since 1976. The group presented a card and gifts.

Executive Director's Highlights: J. Schwartz provided an update on economic development efforts, including outreach to the USDA regarding business development grants. There is an upcoming deadline next month, with several possible projects to consider. He will have more information on this opportunity in the next week. J. Sanford reported that the Warren Planning Commission hosted a public design charrette on March 5th, with over 30 people in attendance. The focus was the Warren Village Main Street project, and an opportunity to further refine the conceptual design. Three groups explored their preferences and reported out to the larger group. There was consensus that instead of sidewalks, as originally proposed for the project, the area between Brook Road and the bridge could be developed as a plaza. Surfacing could help delineate the area as a public space as well as a thoroughfare for vehicles. Other ideas were also discussed, including an EV charging station. The attendees discussed lighting on the bridge, for which they would pursue private funding. The next step is for J. Schwartz to reach out to the funder (Vermont Community Development Program – VCDP) and confirm the ability to change the project components in this way. The timeframe for this project is for construction to be completed by the end of June, 2017. The Waitsfield Village west sidewalk project will be under discussion at the 4/11/16 Waitsfield Select Board meeting, at which final design will be presented. On the housing front, D. Torre reported that the AARP would be preparing an RFP for pilot communities interested in age-friendly design, through a Better Block grant; J. Schwartz added that he sees potential for that process to help re-engage the conversation on village core principles. He said he would be reaching out to the newly elected select board members in Waitsfield. On the historical preservation front, J. Schwartz noted that Lareau Farm is applying for National Register nomination as an individual property. Waitsfield Village Meeting House received funding from VCDP for \$264K to fund flood resilience work. This is separate from its capital campaign currently underway to fund other needed building upgrades. J. Schwartz noted that he accompanied B. Waninger from CVRPC on a recent tour of Sugarbush with M. Wade.

Economic Development Committee Update: P. MacLaren reported that the group decided to call itself "Community Development Committee (CDC)" henceforth, and will be meeting biweekly rather weekly going forward. They are working on defining a mission and recommendations for proceeding with action items identified by community members. There is an understanding of the need to develop both a Plan A and a Plan B. Melissa Roberts from Sugarbush has joined the committee, and a representative from Waitsfield Telecom is currently being recruited.

Staffing: J. Schwartz thanked the committee for its help crafting the new full-time position's job description. The position has been posted widely (via planning community listservs, CommonGood Vermont, VT Joblink, UVM, Vermont Law School, personal emails to colleagues). J. Sanford, B. Ackland and J. Cadwell will meet to review the applicants; J. Schwartz will email out resumes received so far in advance of a meeting. There have

been 6 applications received, some of whom are planners, and all hold master's degrees. B. Waninger suggested adding a submission deadline, as it generates a lot of activity in the final week before the deadline.

B. Waninger was introduced to the group as CVRPC's new Executive Director since last spring. She shared information about her past job experience, which included work in the Peace Corps, National Park Service, and most recently as the Executive Director of Lamoille County RPC. She answered a question from J. Cadwell about the Councils on Government (COG) legislation under consideration. She explained that the legislation, which is no longer called COG, is a means of codifying municipal shared services agreements already in practice.

J. Hoogenboom shared with the group that the Moretown Select Board sent a formal letter to VTrans in regards to the reduction of the Route 100B bridge, located at the north end of town, to one lane due to deterioration of railings. The bridge is otherwise sound structurally. He said the letter was shared with municipal officials from each of the Valley towns, the Chamber of Commerce and the MRVPD; he encouraged similar letters be submitted. Of concern is the long duration (5-10 years) of the closure and the resultant 'D' level of service (LOS). There is a temporary bridge in storage, which the Moretown Select Board would like to see put to use to return the bridge to two lanes.

The Planning District will meet Thursday, April 21, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dara Torre