

Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2017, 7:00 P.M.
General Wait House, Waitsfield

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectboard, Don Simonini, Planning Commission

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commission

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard

Sugarbush: Margo Wade

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

CVRPC: Eric Vorwald

The meeting opened at 7:04 pm. Bob Ackland, Chair, brought the meeting to order.

I. Adjustments to the Agenda

II. Public Comment

III. Accept Minutes of 9/21/17 Steering Committee Meeting

1. Peter proposed two amendments, including that he would like to be marked as “Apologies” instead of “Not Present” and fixing a typo related to a mention of the West Hill House B&B.
2. Jared moved to accept the minutes as amended, Steve seconded the motion.

IV. Staff Report

1. Economic Development

- a. **Warren Main Street Improvement Project:** Construction of the project and the adjacent bridge rehab is complete, Final Reimbursement has been received, and the Town is awaiting approval of its Final Report. The only outstanding item is the procurement and installation of a bench. The Planning Commission is also working on a bike rack, to be installed next spring.
- b. CVRPC & MRVPD installed counters on 9/11 to conduct a follow-up speed study on Main Street to compare to pre-build speed conditions. The speed data shows that the new traffic calming elements of the project are working to slow vehicle speeds. A preliminary analysis concludes:
- c. Within the project area (speed limit 25 mph), the 85th percentile speed (represents the speed that 85 percent of vehicles do not exceed) is 20-21 mph. The 10 MPH Pace Speed (represents the largest number of vehicles traveling in a 10-mph speed range) is 11-20 mph. And only 2.8-3.8% of vehicles are going over the speed limit compared to 74.6-80.1% on another section of Main Street (between Route 100 and the Park & Ride) for example.
- d. Three other counters were installed in Warren on the same date including two on Brook Rd (between Flat Iron Rd and School Rd & another near Dump Rd) and on Main Street between Route 100 and the Park & Ride. Results from

those count locations will also be included in a forthcoming MRVPD memo to the Planning Commission & Selectboard.

2. Flood Resilience/Water Quality/Climate Change

- a. Over 160 community members attended Ridge to River's [Climate of Change - A Mad River Valley Community Forum](#) on 10/11. Roger Hill provided a kick-off presentation, followed by Corrie Miller of FMR highlighting lessons learned from the past two years of R2R effort. Numerous community members and experts hosted topical breakout tables. Kristine and Joshua were in attendance.
- b. VTrans SFY 2018 Transportation Alternatives Program provides funding for municipalities undertaking environmental mitigation projects relating to stormwater and highways, including eligible salt and sand shed projects. Grants funded through this program must have a transportation link. Eligible projects include those that address environmental mitigation activities, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff. Federal funding will have a cap of \$300,000 per project at an 80% federal / 20% local split. Application can be found at: <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt>, and received on or before 11/22.

3. Transportation

- a. MRV TAC is focusing on ramping up for the GMT season including assisting with outreach and marketing, as well as providing feedback on GMT's forthcoming NextGen Transit Study.
- b. The Green Mountain Transit (GMT) Board voted on 10/17 to approve the proposed modifications for the first three trips of the day on the Valley Floor Route to run directly between Lincoln Peak & Waitsfield Village via the Access Rd. They also approved the elimination of the SnowCap Commuter to/from Sugarbush and Montpelier.
 - i. Bob asked if Margo is still on the GMT Board, she said that when the GMT Board and CCTA Board merged they only kept one person from Washington County.
 - ii. Don asked what the total budget is for the MRV service? Margo said it's approximately \$300,000, with GMT paying 70% and a local match of 30%. She explained that Sugarbush provides the largest portion of the local match (approx. \$70,000), with a few other businesses providing a contribution as well (including The Bridges). She also specified that the overall budget does not include Elderly & Disabled service that municipalities pay into.
 - iii. Josh highlighted the fact that private businesses in the MRV provide the local match, and thus the bus service primarily serves those businesses. He said that it typically doesn't work that way in the other areas, with municipalities typically contributing a 20% local match.

- iv. Bob said that is important not to forget that the bus service originated at Sugarbush. He also commented that it seems that the bus service at Mt. Snow and Killington is doing well, and is wondering how it differs from the MRV service.
- c. Waitsfield West Sidewalk Project
 - i. Joshua and Kristine are planning to meet with Kari Dolan on 10/20 to talk about a MRVPD memo that broke down the current budget estimate and compared it to VTrans typical sidewalk costs. The memo concluded that the Waitsfield West Sidewalk project is only 2.8% more than VTrans' typical sidewalk costs and can be attributed to the fact that the Waitsfield projects costs are just estimates at the present time and not bids, don't account for inflation, or the increased cost of construction since 2010-2013.
 - ii. Bob expressed interest in the memo being shared with the full Steering Committee to show the quality of the work that the MRVPD is doing.
 - iii. Steve said that the Budget Committee is exploring options for a path forward to pay for the municipal match for the sidewalk project in conjunction with the Town Administrator and Selectboard.
 - iv. Peter asked if the notes in the Staff Report about the status of temporary easements for the project are a red flag or if it was just a progress report? Josh said that only one temporary easement has been signed, and that there is a lack of clarity on who is working with property owners to secure the other four easements in order to move the project into final design.

4. Housing

- a. Kristine has finalized the 2017 MRV Housing Study, which updates the 2006 version and staff is working on edits for the final version. Kristine also completed a draft of the ~15 page double-sided summary document that will be easier to read and digest. She has solicited several quotes for printing services, and identified a printing vendor. The summary document will be available before or at the Town Leadership meeting on 11/16.
- b. Mad River Valley Housing Coalition met on 10/12 and Phoebe Howe from Efficiency Vermont gave a presentation about their Zero-Energy Modular Program. A link to more information was included in the Staff Report.
 - i. Kristine spoke with Downstreet Housing & Community Development on 9/21 and discussed the possibility of submitting an application for a project on the vacant parcel near Mad River Meadows. Downstreet is pursuing this, undertaking a feasibility analysis and is in contact with VHCB. Kristine followed up on this on 10/12, but Downstreet did not have any update.
- c. Tiny House Pilot Project – Kristine has been working on understanding wastewater regs, financing, supporting Norwich Univ. grant to finish the construction of a tiny house to be moved to Vermont Mobile Home Park.

- i. Bob said he is concerned about tiny houses because of challenges with zoning and wastewater. Steve said some town zoning needs to change but things are moving in the right direction.
 - ii. Peter said he is concerned about the term tiny house, and suggested that the focus should be on small homes.
- d. Tenants for Turns- Kristine is supporting the marketing effort of the new program. Don asked how many people are signed up? Margo said she thinks to date there are 15 beds on the list (not that many landlords, but multi-unit places).

5. Recreation

- a. As a next step from the 2017 MRV Trails Summit on 9/6, a subgroup met on 9/25 focusing on trail network signage. The subgroup came to agreement on a signage approach and identified next steps led by MRVPD and Chamber staff. Kristine took minutes and provided a summary to the larger Trail Summit group.
- b. Kristine had a phone call on 10/17 with a mapping contractor in Randolph, VT in order to explore options and costs for updating the 2012 MRV Trails Map. She has also reached out to organizations involved with Kingdom Trails to identify their mapping contractor.
 - i. Eric suggested Kristine look into Purple Lizard Maps located in Pennsylvania as well.
- c. Mad River Path Update
 - i. MRPA has submitted their Act 250 application for an administrative amendment to Crosspoint Associates' property for the proposed upgrades to the Village Path in Irasville.
 - ii. Peter asked why the path has to go through Act 250? Joshua said because the underlying property has an Act 250 permit, any land development on that parcel requires an amendment. Joshua said that trails should be excluded from the definition of land development, but currently are not. Eric said the Commission for Act 250 is currently meeting to have a discussion about possible changes to Act 250.
- d. Kristine had a phone call on 10/11 with Deborah Bowker, Recreation Director for the Town of Carrabassett Valley, Maine regarding the partnership between the Town, Carrabassett Region NEMBA, Sugarloaf Resort, and Maine Huts & Trails. She obtained valuable information regarding how the organizations work together, their funding structure, and how they created/paid for their trail map.

6. Historic Preservation

- a. Joshua met with members of the Joslin Memorial Library Capital Campaign on 9/27 and provided assistance on their Accessibility Modification Grant application through the Community Development Block Grant program. In addition, Joshua wrote a letter of support for their application on behalf of the MRVPD Steering Committee.
- b. The 2018 CLG grant funding round has been announced. \$69,865 is available for eligible projects, which includes surveys and inventories of

historic and archeological resources, nominations for the national register, preservation planning, information and education about the value of historic preservation, pre-development and development of historic projects. The 2018 grant application and manual are posted on our website here: <http://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/clg-grants>. Applications are due 12/18.

7. Energy

- a. Central Vermont's draft Regional Energy Plan is available for public comment through 10/31. CVRPC staff will present the draft plan to community groups to solicit input in preparation of the final draft (12/31). Additional information regarding the CVRPC's regional energy planning can be found on the CVRPC website at <http://centralvtplanning.org/programs/energy>. The Legislature provided funds for additional local energy plan development. CVRPC is currently soliciting town participation for local energy plan development and they will attend MRV Leadership Meeting and have a table with information.

8. Municipal

- a. The updated Waitsfield Town Plan draft is available for review at <http://www.waitsfieldvt.us/2017/10/06/waitsfield-town-plan-update-draft-for-review/>. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the revised Town Plan on 11/7, 7pm at the Town Offices.
- b. The final draft of the revisions to the Fayston Land Use Regulations has been released, incorporating MRVPD input. The Fayston Planning Commission will hold a public hearing 11/6 at 5pm at the Fayston office.
- c. Kristine attended the Vermont Community Development Program's Grants Management Compliance Workshop on 10/18. The Compliance Workshop is designed to assist grantees with complying with the VCDPs grant requirements such as Environmental Review, Contracts and Procurement, Requisitioning Funds, Financial Monitoring and Audits.

9. Other

- a. Kristine and Joshua have new business cards utilizing the MRVPD logo as approved by the Steering Committee at its 9/21 mtg.
- b. Kristine is working on data updates for the 2017 MRV Data Report.
- c. Joshua and Bob have continued to work on setting up a variety of administrative pieces as part of MRVPD's administrative transition.
- d. Peter said he has spoken to a number of local retailers and they said that this summer has been slow. Bob said that he believes this is why it is important to publish the Economic Dashboard each month. Peter said he would pass along that message to the Chamber staff.

V. Old Business

1. MRVPD FY18 Budget & Workplan Update

- a. Budget
 - i. Bob said he is on a trajectory to present a level funded budget, but he still has more work to do to nail down some of the details. He said because of

the separation from CVRPC, there is a need to dig deep into the numbers. He said the MRVPD has provided good health insurance in the past, but costs are increasing. Steve said one potential solution is to switch health care providers, which he is doing at his office, but he said if you are switching it has to be done by December.

- ii. Bob also said he wants to take 45 minutes to talk about the budget at the upcoming MRVPD retreat.

b. Workplan

- i. Joshua passed out 6-month progress report on the FY18 MRVPD work plan and said the proposed FY19 work plan focuses on a few major categories including placemaking, recreation, transportation, and housing. He also said the emphases is more on implementation than just planning.
- ii. He said that creating the work plan is not an exact science, and the hours are estimated, but the work plan as proposed is over the total hours we have available.
- iii. Peter asked if staff is aware of what type of budget the Recreation District plans to ask the towns for and if there is any overlap between the proposed work of the MRVPD and MRVRD?
 1. Joshua and Kristine have had separate conversations with Jeff Whittingham and Rebecca respectively that have been positive about working together, but they are not aware of specifics at this time.
 2. Peter said it would be great to get to a point where there is a larger plan for recreation and how all of the organizations will work together going forward.
- iv. Don asked if the towns are going to have to focus on energy either individually or through MRVPD? Eric said energy planning is voluntary, it depends on if towns want to have standing in Public Service Board proceedings.

2. 2017 MRV Town Leadership Mtg

- a. The meeting is scheduled for 11/16 from 6-9pm at the Waitsfield Elementary School, a light dinner will be served. The major agenda items will include a presentation from the MRVRD (45 minutes), the MRVPD will present the 2017 Data Report (45 minutes), and Friends of the Mad River will present about R2R (15 minutes)
- b. It will be an official meeting of the MRVPD.
- c. Joshua explained that he debated about the name of the meeting, because it used to be the Tri-Town Selectboard meeting, but after a conversation with Bob he decided to keep it as the MRV Town Leadership Meeting to encourage all boards members from the watershed towns to participate.

VI. New Business

1. MRVPD Retreat

- a. Scheduled for 11/3 at Knoll Farm from 8:30am-1:00pm.
- b. Bob Handed out a proposed agenda that included goals & objectives, as well as agenda items.

- c. Jared suggested keeping the funding discussion open to all options on the table. Bob said a lot of work has already gone into exploring the funding question and that he is going to give the group some homework to read ahead of the retreat.
- d. Margo asked if there are any other examples of towns working together on funding such an entity? Bob said not that he knows of in Vermont and you can't compare us to towns out West because they have a county governance structure.

VII. Events/Workshops

1. [Innovation Spaces Conference | 10/26 | Castleton](#): The VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development is presenting the first in a series of events designed to support economic development statewide. The Innovation Spaces Conference is the first of its kind in Vermont, and will appeal to owners, users, and supporters of co-working spaces, maker spaces, incubators, and accelerators. Sessions will focus on funding, operating models, member management tools, value-added programming, and more.
2. VCDFA Fall Conference: Changing Face of Retail in Vermont's Downtowns | 11/2 | Vergennes: The Vermont Community Development Association & the Vermont Retail & Grocers Association are hosting this event focused on the evolving retail landscape with our downtowns, shopping habits, and regulatory climate. Hear from a panel of downtown retail establishments and organizations on their perspective and experience navigating changes, challenges, and opportunity in the retail landscape, success stories, and engage in deep dive discussion to capture key challenges, opportunities, and action/strategy for the work ahead to boost, support, diversify, and grow downtown retail throughout the state.
3. [Implementing Complete Streets in Small Towns and Rural Communities in Vermont | 11/6 | Webinar](#): This AARP webinar will feature opportunities and solutions that can be applied within a Vermont context that will improve safety and mobility for all users. Join the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#), [VT Agency of Transportation](#) and the [VT League of Cities and Towns](#) to explore important questions facing small towns in rural Vermont and the opportunities that are available to leverage Complete Streets to catalyze economic development in small, rural towns.

VII. Next meeting 11/16

Jared moved to adjourn, Steve seconded. Meeting closed at 8:54pm.