

Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
General Wait House

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectboard; Don Simonini, Planning Commission
Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commission
Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard; Dan Raddock, Planning Commission
Sugarbush: not present
MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren
CVRPC: Eric Vorwald
Guests: Ann Gilbert (Central Vermont New Direction Coalition), Darlene McCormick

The meeting opened at 7:00 pm. Bob Ackland, Chair, brought the meeting to order.

I. Adjustments to the Agenda

1. None

II. Public Comment

1. Darlene McCormick was in attendance to drop off a letter to be entered into the record (*From Darlene/MadRiverConsulting.com To MRVPD SC, dated 5.17.18*) about the continuing topic of the MRVPD's decision for a website vendor. She expressed concern that the the Steering Committee wasn't fully aware of the events that lead to it's selection of a new web developer. She said she had periodic conversations with Josh over the last 2 years about converting the website to Word Press. She said she could have followed up with other members of the Steering Committee about the future of the website, but she was trying to respect the Director's position and not go over his head. She has been told that it was a business decision, but she feels that she was overlooked.
2. The Steering Committee shared a letter expressing MRVPD's decision (*From MRVPD SC to Darlene, dated 5.17.18*) and handed it to Darlene; to also be entered into the record.

III. Accept Minutes of 4/26/18 Steering Committee Meeting

1. Jared moved to accept the minutes, Peter seconded the motion. Peter also complimented Kristine on the quality of the minutes.

IV. New Business

1. Healthy Community Design- Ann Gilbert, Central Vermont New Direction Coalition
 - a. The organization has been around for 20 years, following a drunk driving crash in East Montpelier. Federal and State (VT Department of Health) grant funding support the organization that serves all of Washington County. They work with many different community partners including churches, law enforcement, retailers, selectboards, schools, etc.
 - b. Vermont is a healthy outdoor recreation state, but has high rates of tobacco (all types including vaping), marijuana, and opioid use, as well as underage drinking.
 - c. One of the things the organization is interested in is what towns can do to reduce substance abuse. For example, what is access to marijuana going to look like when it becomes legal starting on July 1st? Concerns include access for minors, energy use and odor from grow facilities?
 - i. Dan said that towns generally can't restrict agricultural use and asked if there is a framework yet for dealing with a proposed marijuana farm? He

- said if it's treated like every other crop, he doesn't think towns can really restrict it. She said that since it's an adult-only product and there's an odor associated with it, there may be an argument for treating it differently.
- ii. She was also asked if the organization is recommending that towns not allow dispensaries? She said they are sensitive to economic considerations, but are worried about how many will be allowed and where. Towns may be able to limit the number allowed and restrict certain distances from schools.
- d. The organization is very concerned about electronic cigarettes; they are not technically considered "cigarettes," so they can be sold cheaply and are easily accessible to kids.
- i. Jared said his wife is a teacher at Harwood and he has heard from her that vaping, particularly with THC is becoming a huge problem. Josh said he heard the same thing through his son who is also at Harwood.
 - ii. Don asked if there is any federal or state interest in regulating e-cigarettes? She said they are hoping that the state will institute a higher tax and they are pushing for raising the age for purchasing tobacco to 21 (alcohol and marijuana are/will be 21 years old).
- e. They are also supporting prescription drug disposal efforts because most kids get drugs from their home medicine cabinet.
- i. All police stations in Washington County have a safe collection box for drop offs. Kinney Drugs in Waitsfield filled out an application for a safe disposal kiosk where pre-paid envelopes are available to put pill bottles in the mail and they will be safely destroyed.
- f. She wants the towns to know that she is here as a resource and to keep healthy community thoughts in their heads when making decisions.

V. Old Business

1. Update: MRV Selectboard Retreat

- o MRVPD developed the idea to host a retreat of the Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston selectboards at Knoll Farm, facilitated by Peter Forbes.
- o Jared said it wasn't clear whether or not the retreat needed to be a publically warned meeting. He said he didn't look closely enough at the Open Meeting Law.
- o Lisa Loomis spoke to Jared, Bob, and Darryl Forrest following the meeting and reported what was discussed.
- o Discussion topics included how important Irasville is to the community as a potential development opportunity, economic vitality, need for new town garage sites in all 3 towns (VTrans old District 6 property?), cost of fire equipment purchases, education, and energy planning.
- o 3 action items that came out of the retreat:
 - Jared, Luke Y, and are Kari D are going to write an editorial to the Harwood Unified Union School District about how important schools are to the community.
 - Organizing a retreat for the Planning Commissions from the three towns, with Josh as the facilitator, to discuss planning for Irasville. There was interest amongst all three towns in working together on this topic. Peter said this topic has been recently discussed at Economic Vitality meetings re: the need to make things happen in Irasville. Steve said the Waitsfield PC is currently concentrating on housing, and then plans to take up the Irasville discussion (including wastewater).
 - Organizing the 3 selectboards to meet quarterly with Peter Forbes serving as facilitator.

VI. Staff Report

2. Transportation

- a. MRV TAC meeting was held on 5/9.
 - i. Dan Currier updated the group on the fact that one of the loop for the permanent traffic counter at the Rt. 17/100 intersection is damaged. He suggested options for remedying the situation including:
 1. Finding similar (old) technology for the existing counter and fixing the loop
 2. Using new technology (radar, counters that can count bikes, etc) that doesn't involved loops to do temporary counts
 3. VTrans taking over the counter (would remain permanent)
 4. Stop counting this location
 - ii. The TAC's preference was for Dan to approach VTrans about taking over the counter. Dan may attend the June Steering Committee meeting if he has an update.
- b. UVM Student Internship Project
 - i. MRVPD, Sugarbush, and GMT have been working with students at UVM on a survey to gather feedback about MRV bus service. They received over 500 responses. Kristine, Margo, and representatives from GMT attended the student groups "closing meeting" on 5/9. The student group provided the report with their findings and recommendations at the meeting, so staff will review them ahead of the June TAC meeting for discussion.
- c. Sugarbush Access Road Path & Inferno Rd Trail Scoping Studies
 - i. The final study was wrapped up in February 2017 and approved by the Selectboard. It is available on the Town of Warren's [website](#).
 - ii. The best source of funding for this project is the [VTrans Bike and Ped Grant Program](#) Design/Construction category (80/20 funding); the next deadline to apply is July 22, 2018. A summary of next steps related to applying for the 2018 grant cycle have been sent to Bob Ackland for discussion at the selectboard level.
 - iii. Bob said he talked to Andy, and they expressed interest in moving forward, but it depends if partners can be lined up to support the local match. There are some conditional use permits that were issued to Sugarbush that include provisions for a path. Bob spoke to Margo and she is approaching Win Smith about the topic. Margo also came up with a list of 12 other partners along the Access Rd that might be able to support this effort.
 - iv. Bob asked if the public hearing has to be before 6/22? Josh said yes and suggested putting it on the selectboard agenda as a placeholder.

3. Housing

- a. ZEM on-tour
 - i. Following a presentation by Efficiency VT (EVT) at a MRV Housing Coalition meeting, EVT has developed a partnership with Downstreet to hold open houses for a ZEM (zero energy modular) home with solar and battery storage on a vacant lot at Vermont Mobile Home Park. The open houses will be held (Thursdays from 2-6pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm) until May 31st for park residents, mobile home owners, and other local residents to check out the homes.
 - ii. The goals are to engage with mobile home owners to assess their housing situation provide options/assistance that Efficiency VT offers including ZEM replacement, lighting and appliance upgrades,

Capstone Community Action weatherization, to match 4 vacant lots in Vermont with prospective ZEM buyers. EVT will be offering Home Energy Visits and results will determine what options/assistance owners are eligible for. Kristine is helping with outreach to inform the community about these opportunities (through the Housing Coalition, Front Porch Forum, gathered mobile home owners contact info from surrounding towns for mailing, and helping to present at the 5/16 MRV Rotary Meeting).

b. Tenants 4 Turns

- i. Kristine met with Sugarbush staff on 5/11 for a recap of the first year of the Tenants for Turns program. Their human resources staff thought the program was wildly successful and said they can't imagine not doing it in the future. They also received no complaints about the program or their employees. The group also discussed potential changes/improvements for next season. Below are stats that Sugarbush put together that summarize the program's first year.
- ii. 42 potential landlords inquired about the program
- iii. 28 landlords completed applications
- iv. 17 properties used to house employees
 1. 8 out of 17 properties had previously rented to Sugarbush employees, 9 had not
 2. 3 out of the 17 properties had not been rented in the past year
- v. 26 employees housed
 1. 7 out of the 26 employees were new hires to Sugarbush
 2. Rental costs ranged from \$275-640 per month
- vi. Incentives Redeemed
 1. 4 voucher packages (10 lift tickets)
 2. 8 season passes
 3. 4 SHaRC passes
 4. 1 did not redeem
 5. Considering offering a golf benefit next season
- vii. Geographic locations
 1. 1 Moretown, 1 Fayston, 1 Hancock, 2 Roxbury (one was a tiny house), 6 Waitsfield, 6 Warren

4. Recreation

- a. Staff is continuing to facilitate the MRV Unified Trailhead Kiosk & Mapping Project.
 - i. The seventh Trails Collaborative working group meeting will be held on 5/21 at 4:30pm starting at the General Wait House for people to view the prototype kiosk and the meeting will move to Waitsfield Town Office at 4:45pm.
 - ii. Josh said that staff is working with Wood & Wood on the sign design and a Fayston resident on the fabrication. He said this is a really incredible collaborative project in the MRV and wouldn't be possible without funding from the towns and volunteers.
 - iii. Unfortunately, the mapping contractor informed us on 5/16 that he's juggling too many balls and needs to terminate his participation on this project. Josh said it's going to be hard to match his quality of work for the price. Josh has spoken to CVRPC, state GIS staff, and other professionals but no contractor has been identified due in part to the existing budget.

- b. Josh said there are questions related to procurement in terms of next steps of hiring a new cartographer. MRVPD does not currently have a procurement policy; he said there has only been approximately 5 outside contractors hired in the last 10 years. In terms of hiring the cartographer and sign designer, staff put together Scope of Work(s), did the groundwork to talk to professionals ahead of time, and made logical choices, but didn't go through a full RFP process. He was looking for direction from the Steering Committee.
 - i. Dan said he thinks it makes to have a policy for contracts above a certain level (\$5,000).
 - ii. Don asked about where we might get more money to support the budget for cartography? He suggested that Josh could write something up for the Rotary and he will pitch the idea.
 - iii. Steve said he thinks MRVPD should have a formal procurement policy in the future, but at the moment we need to move ahead with the project and find a new cartographer. He suggested reaching out to Brain Voigt.
 - iv. The recommendation is to look at Waitsfield and Warren's policies and explore options for a MRVPD procurement policy. For the current situation Josh was encouraged to utilize a pragmatic approach akin to what was employed at the beginning of the project.
- c. Mad River Path Association is planning 14 path improvement projects this summer, including bridges, trails etc. Their main project involves upgrades to the Waitsfield Village Path in Irasville. Depending on the results from Dig Safe, they anticipate starting work under the Slow Road maples with the installation of fence posts by a contractor in the next couple of weeks, then putting down the new surface and starting the plazas on Post Office Road.
- d. Catamount Trail Association hired a new Executive Director, Matt Williams, who began on April 23rd. Joshua met with him on 5/11, providing a welcome, context and detail on the Trailhead Kiosk & Mapping Project, and discussed future collaborations between our organizations.

5. Municipal

- a. The Warren Planning Commission are holding a Public Hearing on Wednesday, 5/30, to receive comment on revision and updates to the Warren Town Plan (7:30 PM at the Warren Town Hall). Joshua received the latest draft from the PC's consultant on 5/11 and will take a look at it before the public hearing.

VII. Next meeting –June 21, 2018

Steve moved to adjourn, Peter seconded. Meeting closed at 9:16pm.