

Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
General Wait House

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectboard; Don Simonini, Planning Commission
Waitsfield: Kari Dolan, Selectboard; Jon Jamieson; Selectboard, Steve Shea, Planning Commission
Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard; Dan Raddock, Planning Commission
Sugarbush: Jim Westhelle
MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren
CVRPC: Eric Vorwald

The meeting opened at 7:03 pm. Bob Ackland, Chair, brought the meeting to order.

I. Adjustments to the Agenda

1. Bob added the topic of a Tri-Town Selectboard Retreat to the agenda under the Old Business section

II. Public Comment

1. No public comment

III. Accept Minutes of 10/19/17 Steering Committee Meeting

1. Jared moved to accept the minutes, Don seconded the motion

IV. Staff Report

1. Transportation

- a. Mad River Valley Bus Service 2017/2018
 - i. GMT seasonal bus service continues to run daily until April 1st.
<http://ridegmt.com/regions/mad-river-valley/>
 - ii. Ridership on the Valley Floor and Evening Service is down slightly but is similar to last season. The routes up on the mountain (Access Rd, Mountain Condos, and Mt. Ellen) are down by 20-30%. The hope is that ridership increases in March with the improvement in ski conditions.
 - iii. Peter commented on the question in the MRV TAC meeting minutes regarding the accuracy of the ridership counts. He said he's concerned that drivers aren't accurately recording people as they board the bus. And that if any decisions are made there should be consideration given to the accuracy of the numbers.
- b. Waitsfield West Sidewalk Project
 - i. MRVDPD is working toward obtaining confirmation from VTrans for Kristine to be the Local Project Manager for the sidewalk project.

2. Housing

- a. The Mad River Valley Housing Coalition meeting was held on 3/9. Local resident Joan Crossen presented her idea for a Senior Retirement Community in the MRV.
 - i. Joan will be doing a presentation to the Rotary as well. Steve Shea asked if the presentation was based on a need or if it was solutions based. Kristine highlighted the fact that there is a waiting list for

Evergreen Place and there is not another senior housing option in the MRV; particularly anything that offers independent living. Jon Jamieson said that the first model of Evergreen Place failed and Cathedral Square took it over? Details were not clear on this.

b. Tenants for Turns

- i. As of 3/9, Sugarbush had 17 landlords that have received incentives and 23 employees who have found housing through the program. They have not received any negative feedback from landlords about any employees/tenants.

3. Recreation

- a. Staff is continuing to facilitate the MRV Unified Trailhead Signage & Mapping Project. The fourth Trails Collaborative working group meeting was held on 2/21. The municipal portion of funding for the project has been approved in the respective towns. Kristine, Joshua, and Jasmine have developed a Scope of Work for a both a cartographer and graphic designer to continue to move the project forward. Warren ZA provided feedback about the proposed kiosk permitting and staff is awaiting a response from Waitsfield as well.
- b. The fifth Trails Collaborative working group meeting will be held on 4/5 at 4:30pm at the General Wait House.
- c. Kristine's proposal was approved to present at the 2018 Vermont Walk/Bike Summit in White River Junction on May 4, 2018 about the MRV Moves Plan and the trailhead kiosk & mapping project.

4. Mapping

- a. Waitsfield has completed the Statewide Parcel Mapping Program and the new data will be available on the ANR Natural Resources Atlas by April 1st: <http://anr.vermont.gov/maps/nr-atlas>. Warren has signed up this week for the program. Kristine will follow up with Fayston about their interest in participating.

5. Energy

- a. DHCD has approximately \$20,000 in Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment funding to support DC fast charge and Level 2 charging stations on publicly owned property in both Designated Downtowns and Designated Village Centers. Both Waitsfield and Warren Villages are eligible. The maximum grant amount is \$20,885. Jim Sanford reached out on 3/6 on behalf of the Warren PC with interest in electrical vehicle charging stations in Warren Village and at the East Warren Schoolhouse. Joshua has explored state funding options, such the 75% program listed above. He has suggested Warren wait until late summer when a new DHCD program will be released - \$2.8 million dedicated to EV charging stations and 100% funding for municipal projects. Staff will keep the Steering Committee and the Warren PC abreast when the next round of funding is available.

6. Other

- a. Watershed Consulting Associates continues its work on the Mad River Stormwater Master Plan. They have met with CVRPC and Friends of the Mad River, road foremen and town officials to discuss problem areas in the study towns. A desktop assessment of available data is underway, which will target locations for field visit sites. After the field visits, each town will be provided with maps and site lists they can use to set priorities for action.
- b. Three changes on MRVPC SC representatives: Jim Sanford is stepping down as the Warren PC representative after 15 years, to be replaced by Dan Raddock. The Waitsfield SB has appointed Jon Jamieson to be its

representative, replacing Kari Dolan. Jim Westhelle will be serving as SB's appointee for the foreseeable future.

- c. Joshua met with John Boyer of the Washington County Youth Services Bureau on 3/12 regarding his work in promoting health and wellbeing of youth in our region. His 4-year Healthy Community Design process is focused on helping towns and regions create policies and system changes that encourage healthy behavior. John is interested in sharing the results of his town-by-town analysis with the MRVPD SC at its May meeting.

7. Historic Preservation

- a. Staff has been assisting the Joslin Memorial Library Capital Campaign on the environmental review portion of their Accessibility Modification Grant application through the Community Development Block Grant program. Notice on their grant request is expected in early March.

V. Old Business

1. Tri-Town Selectboard Retreat
 - a. Bob is trying to schedule a tri-town selectboard retreat. Bob said he reached out to Kari, and she said Waitsfield might do their own retreat (selectboard and other town boards) and the tri-town selectboard retreat as well. Bob explained that Peter Forbes is willing to do the retreat pro bono and he is available for dates in May. There is no cost to the towns, but there is an investment in terms of time for selectboard members to be interviewed and attend the retreat. Bob will follow up again with selectboards to try and schedule a retreat.
2. Broad funding discussion
 - a. Peter summarized the last Steering Committee meeting where it was unanimous that a small committee should be set up to explore broader funding options for the MRVPD and community investment. Peter brought this decision back to the Chamber, and their board decided unanimously to work with the MRVPD on this effort. The committee will be comprised of Peter MacLaren (Chamber), Jasmine Bigelow (Chamber), Darryl Forrest (Waitsfield), Don Simonini (Fayston), Jared Cadwell (Fayston, chair), and Bob Ackland (Warren).
 - b. He said that the goal is to take a 2-month period to put together a plan, which will basically be consolidating existing work and gleaning information from other areas that have pursued similar approaches like Woodstock, VT. The committee will then come back to the Steering Committee for feedback, and subsequently take their plan to the selectboards. He also said that Margo talked to Win Smith about this approach and he was open to supporting the effort to put together a plan, but he was not going to prejudge his position on the outcome.

VI. New Business

3. Update on Town Meetings
 - a. Warren- Bob provided an overview of Warren's town meeting saying that it was uneventful and that the budget passed without issue. He said there was some discussion about the money the USFS gives to the town that typically comes from logging proceeds (approximately \$20k) about whether or not it should go to the PTO this year, but ultimately that passed as well.
 - b. Waitsfield- Kari provided an overview of Waitsfield's town meeting saying that the selectboard is concerned about the large percentage of taxes going to education funding, as well as to paying down debt service. She also said that the selectboard highlighted the great work the town has done with the completion of Lovett Park, acquisition of the recreation fields, committing funding to the Scrag project, but that the town also needs to focus on fiscal constraint. She said that's why the selectboard reduced contributions to social services by 50%, but there

was an article added to fund three additional services that passed. There was also a motion from the floor that passed to restore \$10,000 for the Restroom & Recreation Fund. She also discussed the town's water system; saying that ever since the water main break, they've been wrestling with how much the town should pay for the water system in recognition of the need for fire protection. Based on current level of ERUs, it was calculated that the town would pay ~\$20,000 as a new line item in the budget.

- c. Fayston- Jared provided an overview of Fayston's town meeting. He said that Maxine & Ed Read spoke directly to the education finance proposal and they got a lot of questions and feedback from the audience. People are concerned about the vote a year ago for school consolidation. Jared said he thinks there is a need to slow down and take a look at what's happening because many young families have settled in Fayston for the small school. He also said that housing affordability was a big issue as well.
 - d. Bob asked rhetorically if now is the time to think about a Mad River Valley School district? Kari said if we don't address this issue within the next few years, when Act 46 goes into affect, that gives voters an ability to close schools, we may not be able to avoid it. Jared said there's an upcoming meeting at Harwood about the school redesign, which will allow for more opportunity for public comment.
4. MRVPD Steering Committee Appointments
- a. The Waitsfield selectboard, Warren planning commission, and Sugarbush have already made appointments. MRVPD's slate of officers will be selected at the next Steering Committee meeting and their terms will be from 4/1 to 3/31.
 - b. Kari is personally disappointed not to be continuing on the Steering Committee. She decided to step down to give Jon a chance to be on the board. She hopes to stay in touch and engaged in the future.
 - c. Bob said he's not happy with his selection for an accountant, and he's now looking for alternative in the MRV. Steve and Jim both suggested other options. There was then a discussion about whether or not Josh should have access to the bank accounts and the ability to sign checks because right now the process is challenging. Jared said he isn't comfortable with an employee signing his or her own checks. Steve said he doesn't have a problem with Josh signing checks, as long as there's an accountant doing the reconciliation. Bob said he thinks the check signing process should just stay the way it is for now, but he will look for another accountant in the area.
5. FY19 Work Plan
- a. Josh explained that the MRVPD's new fiscal year and Work Plan begins on 3/31. He asked if the Work Plan as it stands now makes sense given how things are progressing or if changes need to be made?
 - b. Steve said that a majority of the Waitsfield Planning Commission wants to focus on accomplishing zoning changes to support affordable housing in the short term, rather than take up the issue of planning for Irasville in general. Bob asked how that changes what is already in the Work Plan for Irasville? Steve said that MRVPD is still going to be working on tasks related to Irasville including wastewater mapping and assisting the PC with the zoning changes.
 - c. For the new members, Steve explained why there is a need is for a new plan for Irasville, including the existing 1 acre zoning, well shields, and a lack of wastewater capacity. He went into detail about the wastewater challenge saying that there is no spare wastewater capacity in Irasville that he is aware of besides 2,000 gpd that the Parkers own.
 - d. Kari brought to the Committee's attention that another constraint in Irasville is the wetlands. She explained that the state is going to be releasing a new permit called the "non-reporting General Permit" that will allow for some impact to

wetlands that is below a certain level of disturbance. This could allow for some development or redevelopment of downtown areas that abut wetlands.

- e. Jared asked if there's anything else in the Work Plan that should be brought to the Committee's attention? Josh mentioned that under the transportation section, work on Park & Ride lots has stalled but it could come back up if grant money is secured in the future for EV charging stations.
- f. On the topic of energy, Eric said that CVRPC is currently helping Warren with energy planning, and that there may be another round of funding available in August that could support efforts in Waitsfield.
- g. Kari said a solar developer has approached the Town of Waitsfield about solar panels being installed in the town sand pit, but she said they would rather make decisions on energy generation based on a plan rather than a one-off project.
- h. Dan said the goal is to get substantial deference for the Warren Town Plan, but Eric said they still have some work to do and have to obtain approvals before their plan can be considered. Eric said Waitsfield is closer to getting substantial deference because their plan is done.
- i. Don said that the Fayston Planning Commission has not been focusing on energy planning, because their plan is not set to expire until 2019. Eric said the enhanced energy planning is voluntary, so the Planning Commission doesn't have to do anything if they are not interested in substantial deference.
- j. Eric also highlighted the fact that enhanced energy planning is more than just siting of renewable generation; it also includes transportation, heating, transmission, etc.). He also made clear that the municipal plan must contain the energy planning, because that is the document that gets the deference. He said that the MRV towns could work together to create an energy plan and work to ensure that the municipal plans are consistent.
- k. Josh said If MRVPD is going to take on energy planning, than other tasks in the work plan need to be changed. There did not appear to be an interest from the Committee to include energy planning in the upcoming Work Plan.
- l. Peter asked about the relationship between the MRVPD and MRVRD? Bob said that Liza Walker has joined MRVRD and will be serving as the chair and Fayston has appointed a new member. Liza has asked to meet with Bob ahead of a joint MRVRD and MRVPD board meeting. Josh said the joint board meeting could happen at the April Steering Committee and MRVRD will be looking for feedback on their strategic plan.

VII. Next meeting –April 26, 2018

Kari moved to adjorn, Jared seconded. Meeting closed at 9:02pm.