



MAD RIVER VALLEY

PLANNING DISTRICT

Fayston • Waitsfield • Warren

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

July 19, 2018
7:00 P.M.
General Wait House
4061 Main St, Waitsfield, VT

Present were:

Fayston: Don Simonini, Planning Commission

Waitsfield: Jon Jamieson; Selectboard

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard; Dan Raddock, Planning Commission

Sugarbush: Margo Wade, Win Smith

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

CVRPC: Dan Currier, Transportation Program Manager

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz, Executive Director; Mariah Noth, Community Planner

Guests: MRV Television

I. Adjustments to the Agenda

1. Move up introductions of Dan Currier (CVRPC) and Mariah Noth (MRVPD)

II. Public Comment

1. No public comment.

III. Accept Minutes of 6/21/18 Steering Committee Meeting

1. John moved to accept the minutes. Peter seconded the motion. Bob complimented Jared (not present) on the quality of last meeting's minutes.

IV. Introductions

1. Dan Currier (CVRPC) introduced himself as Transport Program Manager for CVRPC, formerly a Natural Resources Planner/ GIS Specialist. He represented CVRPC at the meeting while CVRPC hires for Eric Vorwald's recently vacated position. The hiring process is on track, and CVRPC hopes to hire by late September/early October.
2. Mariah Noth (MRVPD) introduced herself as the new Community Planner for the MRVPD. A Vermonter, she graduated from UVM with a degree in Community and International Development and Food Systems. Her prior experience includes economic development research and community-based projects at the Church Street Marketplace and coordinating the Fellowships Program at UVM. She expressed great excitement to join such a dynamic, energetic community and engage in impactful projects that enhance the MRV.

V. Staff Report

1. Recreation
 - a. Staff is continuing to facilitate the MRV Unified Trailhead Kiosk & Mapping Project.
 - i. The ninth Trails Collaborative Working Group meeting was held on 7/16. The

primary focus was on reviewing the 4th draft of the base MRV trail map and discussing options for a final trail classification structure. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 7/23.

ii. Map

1. Brian Voigt, the new project cartographer going forward, has been working with Joshua on finalizing the base map from the previous GIS cartographer and developing draft maps for the next 5 locations.

iii. Kiosks

1. The prototype kiosk, Scrag Mtn Town Forest, has been completed and is now installed at the trailhead. The project includes a total of 53 kiosks.
2. Joshua finalized and obtained hardware, selected final structure treatment, re-cut holes, and worked on sanding/planing the posts. Bob Cook, as representative of the Waitsfield Conservation Commission on this kiosk, provided tremendous coordination and effort in getting the sign finished and in the ground.
3. Joshua underscored the extensive buy-in from the trail organizations.
4. Bob commented on the commitment displayed by Joshua and the MRVPD as he has taken on more responsibility than originally anticipated. The Committee thanked him for his efforts on behalf of this collaborative project for the Valley.

2. Transportation

a. Waitsfield West Sidewalk Project

- i. Waitsfield's Town Administrator, Trevor Lashua, has taken over Local Project Manager duties from MRVPD after Kristine's departure. Trevor is working on a few more temporary easements needed in order to move forward with final design.

3. Municipal

- a. Ruth Robbins has been hired as Warren's Zoning Administrator, replacing Miron Malbeouf. Ruth has served as Warren's Planning Coordinator for many years and has been the Interim Zoning Administrator since Miron's departure.
- b. Susan Senning is leaving her post as Waitsfield's Planning & Zoning Administrator to take a position of staff attorney with the VT League of Cities and Towns. Susan will serve as PZA in Waitsfield full time for a couple more weeks, then reduce to part time until 8/10.

4. Other

- a. Eric Vorwald left his Senior Planner position at CVRPC on 7/27 to serve as the City of Winooski's Planning and Zoning Manager.
- b. Municipal Planning Grants: **Due 10/1.**
 - i. Warren's updated municipal plan can be expected in October; Town plans to explore grant applications for various projects in 2019.
 - ii. Bob inquired about what grants/projects MRV should prioritize. Josh said there is great opportunity regarding development of Irasville and Waitsfield Village, and that grants for visioning expertise would be useful.
 - iii. The Commission on Act 250's schedule includes four more forums in South Royalton, Island Pond, Rutland, and Burlington. The next forum will be held at the Chase Community Center at Vermont Law School, in South Royalton, VT from 6:00-8:00 PM on 7/25.

- iv. Peter encouraged the group to attend the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting on 9/6 at the 1824 House at 5:30 pm.

VI. Old Business

1. None.

VII. New Business

1. Sugarbush Data Report (Margo Wade, Win Smith)
 - a. Industry Evolution toward Consolidation
 - i. Large acquisitions across the country has resulted in mass consolidation, leaving Sugarbush and Smugglers Notch as the last remaining large independently-owned operations in VT
 - ii. The unique qualities of the MRV are crucial assets for Sugarbush (e.g. environment, culture of community)
 - b. 2017-18 Ski Season
 - i. 162 days, 386,000 visits-- extremely tough weather until March when record snowfall increased visits
 - ii. Accelerated \$6 M capital expansion program to compete with larger areas incl. 2 lifts and access gates
 - iii. Climate change will clearly result in volatile weather and they are increasing resilience and improving snowmaking technology
 - iv. New partnership with Ikon Pass and Mountain Collective to compete with multi-mountain passes used around the state
 - v. S.105 legislation vetoed and will be watched as it would weaken the enforceability of waivers and releases, increasing liability exposure for many VT businesses and non-profits (esp. Recreation industry)
 - c. Energy Use Reductions (28%)
 - i. Result of low energy snow cannons
 - d. Water/ Wastewater
 - i. No issues with draw down of water supply; plenty of wastewater capacity (though cannot be utilized by municipalities)
 - e. Employee Residence Survey
 - i. Recap on the success of Tenants for Turns
 1. 23 employees housed in 19 units, but more rental supply than demand due to affordability issues
 2. Many thanks extended to Kristine Keeney for her leadership
 3. Sugarbush HR will spearhead the program
 - ii. Affordability issues for seasonal employees (lift operators and lower paid positions)
 1. Caused a need for increasing J-1 visas (cultural exchange, housing provided) from 37 to 80 for 2018-19
 2. Will require more affordable rental housing
 - f. Future Expansion
 - i. Want to expand capacity for conferences/ weddings (esp. midweek) in summer
 - ii. Charrette with architects next week to plan 80-100 room hotel (\$15-18 M)
 1. Less impactful project than original permitted facilities expansion; will update as project develops
 2. Will be an important economic driver for community in summer
 3. Optimistic timeline: Complete by end of 2020
2. 2018 Legislative Changes to Local Planning & Regulation:
http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/DHCD_Legislative%20Update_2018_FINAL.pdf

- a. Town Plan Notification Update: May be shared digitally
 - b. Village Center Designation renewal period increased from 5 to 8 years
 - c. Accessory On-Farm Business Limitations: Authorized Towns to make decisions regarding regulation
 - i. Positive development; will increase predictability and gives municipalities a role vs decision held solely by Agency of Ag
3. Bob informed the Committee of a Special Meeting on 9/13 with the sole purpose of the MRV Chamber and MRVPD joining to hear the proposal set forth by the MRV Vitality Team.
- a. Meeting will require a vote to approve/disapprove recommendations
 - b. Committee agrees to attend.
 - c. Tentative location at Waitsfield Town Hall at 7:00 pm.
 - d. Meeting to get approval from Warren, Waitsfield, and Fayston to follow (Date TBD)
4. Importance of Trails Project for the Valley
- a. Don referenced the Stowe Walking Trail being #1 Destination in VT on TripAdvisor
 - b. John referenced the many and varied users he'd witnessed at the Dana Hill Rd trail, and that this network is a crucial asset for the Valley
 - c. Joshua expressed that the project is making strides to build a Valley-wide collaborative relationship that will pay dividends in future efforts
 - d. Outreach Plan: A draft press release has been drafted - plan to release in next week's issue of *The Valley Reporter* and work with Chamber to reach other outlets

VIII. Next Meeting – September 20, 2018

Bob moves to adjourn, Peter Seconded. Meeting closed at 8:44 pm.