

**Mad River Valley Planning District  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Draft Meeting Minutes for  
June 18, 2015  
7:00 PM  
General Wait House**

Present:

Fayston: Carol Chamberlin, Planning Commissioner

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard Member; Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner

Sugarbush: Margo Wade

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz, Dara Torre

Guests: Will Flender, Mad River Path Association; John Hoogenboom, Moretown Selectboard Member

Acceptance of the minutes of the May 21, 2015 meeting – minutes were approved.

**Director's Report:** Joshua discussed activities from the past month, including his participation in Waitsfield's West Village Sidewalk Committee, which has identified a design consultant, now approved by the Selectboard. He also met with Peter Laskowski, Waitsfield constable, who has been exploring with the constables in Warren and Fayston the possibility of inter-municipal agreements. Joshua reached out to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns for guidance. Bob commented that the Warren constables are fully trained, and referenced the recent media coverage on Dorset-Manchester. The CVRPC has plans for an upcoming forum exploring shared municipal services. On the active transportation front, Joshua reported that 4 proposals were received, and the review committee will review them next week with the goal of selecting a consultant by early July. Other recent staff activities have included an MRV Transportation Advisory Committee meeting to review ridership data, a letter to the District 5 Commission regarding Sugarbush's Valley House lift project, and production of a presentation on MRV's economic development activities for the American Planners Association (APA) conference next week that Joshua will attend.

**Mad River Path Association Update:** Will Flender, MRPA Executive Director, gave a status update and an overview of projects in the pipeline. The MRPA is now 25 years old, with over 400 members and 8 miles of trail, managed via \$95,000 in annual revenue, including \$10,000 in municipal support. Fundraising is going well for the Waitsfield Elementary School path, with a goal of summer construction. In addition to the Warren Path extension, Waitsfield sidewalk projects and the Active Transportation Plan, progress is being made on the Marble Hill Trails. Permanent trail easements will soon be acquired for re-routing some unsuitable trails and adding sections to create north-south connectivity from Chase Brook to the Sugarbush Access Road. The Catamount Trail in the area will be re-routed. Will plans to pursue a recreation trail grant to complete the project. MRPA is also exploring options for a Sugarbush Access Road path with the

Warren Selectboard and Planning Commission, and will pursue funding for a new scoping study. Bob inquired about progress on the Top Gas project; Will reported that things are moving along slowly.

**MRV Watershed Wide Water Management Plan Update:** Joshua stated that representatives from the High Meadows Fund would visit with the planning team next week. The MRV team applied for funding (\$60K) for this planning effort, which grew out of the recent Leahy Summit. In advance of the visit, Corrie Miller of Friends of the Mad River assembled a subset of team members to fine-tune the project goals and timeline. Joshua and Dara worked with Corrie to outline the staff's role in the project. MRVPD Steering Committee members are also well-represented on the team, and expressed their support for the project.

**Sugarbush Data Report:** Margo shared highlights from the 2014-15 Sugarbush MOU data report, starting with the Traffic & Transit sections (#24 & #25). The MOU monitoring days coincided with cold spells, and consequently did not capture any of the highest skier visit peak days, which ranged between 7 and 8K. The Energy section (#26) shows a continuing trend to lower electrical consumption, following two years of investments in more efficient snowmaking infrastructure. Margo estimated that the "Big 7" meter, which reflects the majority of snowmaking uses, showed a 15% reduction. Bob inquired whether gallons of water pumped could also be provided, to help clarify the amount of actual snowmaking. Margo offered to try to provide that information for us to include in the upcoming MRVPD data report, which will also include historical summer usage for comparison purposes. Margo reported charitable donations at just under \$1 million in the Community Services section (#28). Joshua noted a considerable increase over donations referenced in the 2011-12 report. Bob and Joshua asked for clarification on non-local marketing incentives included in the total (e.g., Warren Miller ticket promotions). Margo agreed to dig deeper into that for next year. For the Housing section (#29), Margo reported more success at tracking how many employees moved into the area specifically for employment at Sugarbush (95 seasonal employees, 13 year round employees). Sugarbush uses a paper survey form for seasonal employees and captures residence from its year-round employees via Survey Monkey. When asked about response rate, missing from the report, Margo stated that she would add that info to the report before finalizing (749 seasonal respondents, 103 year-round). For skier visits (#32), Margo noted that the data shows another good year, though with lower holiday peaks than the previous season. Overall visit numbers, however, balanced out and compared favorably to last year. For Wastewater (#33), Steve inquired about the implications of the data. Bob stated that wastewater data correlates with occupancy, and helps identify the presence of destination skiers. Joshua added that the flows are lower than that reported in the 2011-12 report. Margo noted that some important fixes have been made on some of the older pipes, reducing groundwater inflows. She also pointed out that there were fewer melt events this season, so water usage was down.

**Sugarbush Projects Update:** Margo updated the committee on the Gadd Brook project, which has received its permits (still some well permits forthcoming), with

groundbreaking slated officially for 6/19 at 9AM, although work started on Monday. The Valley House project received its permits, and is now in the 30 day appeals period.

**MRV Vision & Vitality:** Peter reported that progress continues with the work of the Vision & Vitality Steering Committee (VVSC), which has established and publicized workshop dates, starting with Lodging and Dining on July 23rd. The committee is identifying key invitees for each sector as well as conducting public outreach to encourage broad participation. Joshua met with the planning commissions of Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston about the program. Peter reported that he and Bob visited Killington recently to learn about their economic development process.

**MRVPD System Map:** Joshua distributed a revised Super System Map for the MRVPD that he and Patricia recently edited. He noted the process of cataloging relationships and customer groups was rewarding. Everyone agreed that Patricia is to be commended for donating her time and expertise to this process. Peter added that the Chamber is now in the process of preparing its map.

**Other:** Jim Sanford queried the group about the possible role MRVPD could have played in encouraging Waitsfield's consideration of the bank building in Irasville as the best choice for the new town office. Steve discussed the history of deliberations, and his confidence that the town acted prudently. Joshua shared details on his participation in early discussions. Steve added that the Waitsfield Planning Commission, and indeed the MRVPD, needs to focus on a plan for Irasville going forward.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27PM.

**Next Meeting:** July 16, 2015 at 7PM. The Steering Committee will not meet in August.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dara Torre