

Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee
September 17, 2015
8 PM
Meeting Minutes

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectboard; Carol Chamberlin, Planning Commission

Waitsfield: Kari Dolan, Selectboard; Steve Shea, Planning Commission

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectboard; Jim Sanford, Planning Commission

Sugarbush: Margo Wade

Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz; Dara Torre

The minutes of the 7/16/15 Steering Committee were accepted. The committee did not meet in August.

Director's Report: Joshua reviewed recent activities, including a visit from Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) staff and board members who were touring disaster relief projects in the MRV, having gathered for a retreat at American Flatbread. One of the ACCD funded project, the Warren Main Street Improvement project, is about to launch a Request for Proposals for a local project manager. For the Waitsfield Pocket Park project, there is additional environmental review work as well as an easement to obtain before finalizing a grant agreement, expected by later in November. On the active transportation/recreation front, Joshua reported that the planning process is underway with "MRV Moves", with the consultant (SE Group) having made a website (www.mrvmoves.org), and surveys and interviews with stakeholders are coming up this fall at the Farmer's Market and Sugarbush Community day. Joshua was asked for more information about a recent court case (the Newark decision) and its implications for town plans; he will circulate a link to more info. Steve Shea suggested also circulating a link on the recent vtdigger article on the pace of solar installations and implications for towns. Joshua reported that Waitsfield United Church of Christ has been doing some visioning work and is exploring physical and programmatic changes to expand the use of the facility as the Waitsfield Meeting House. A letter of support from the Planning District has been requested as they seek ACCD funding for flood proofing work; the steering committee voted to approve. Joshua mentioned a recurrent theme around housing coming up in the Economic Vitality Series workshops. He provided a summary on the work of the MRV Housing Coalition, which has been fairly inactive over the last couple years. He suggests inviting representatives from the coalition as well as Downstreet Housing and Community Development (formerly Community Land Trust of VT) to an upcoming steering committee meeting. The group discussed some barriers to more affordable housing including difficulty funding multifamily development and septic capacity preventing sales. Updated housing stock data and info on available resources will be needed to better inform community discussion on this topic.

Tri-Town Meeting: The date (likely during the first week in December), agenda and format were discussed; Warren is expected to be the host this year. Joshua suggested several 20-minute topics to include stormwater planning update, recreation and solid

waste, with an Economic Summit and MRVPD presentation. Bob would like to see the meeting expand to include Planning Commission and DRB members, with high-level discussion of how the Planning District can support and be involved more with regionally significant projects. Discussion ensued on this topic, with possible means and constructs explored. Representatives from the recreation district will be invited to the October steering committee meeting.

Sugarbush Update: Margo reported that Gadd Brook construction is moving along, and that the drive and parking lot have been redone, with a top layer of paving coming. Yestermorrow is rebuilding the pedestrian bridge after Columbus Day. Concrete and towers are being delivered via helicopter for the Valley House lift. Plans are developing for an unexpected repair needed for a main snowmaking line, requiring up to \$500K to fix. Sugarbush Community Day on October 10th will include a pancake breakfast at the Warren Fire Station. Margo described a new 500 KWH solar carport project planned for the new parking lot (Lot F). She circulated photos of a similar project in Connecticut. Sugarbush will be leasing land to the solar developer who in turn is able to sell the credits. The resort expects to trim tens of thousands from its electricity bills through lower rates from this and from additional solar purchasing through Green Lantern in Stowe. The carport project is currently in the 45-day notice period of Act 250. Margo will check whether the developer would like a letter of support from MRVPD for their application; the steering committee has no objections to providing one.

Economic Vitality Series: Peter reported that the workshop series has been going very well, with consistently good outputs and great enthusiasm. He credits effective communication through Valley Reporter articles and opinion pieces as helping build awareness, with over 135 attendees so far, many of whom do not regularly participate in municipal level conversations. Consultant Patricia Floyd has volunteered countless hours to the effort, along with members of the EVS steering committee, who have also recently formed a subgroup to focus on metrics. Peter hopes to have some information on this for the second Economic Summit, scheduled for 11/17 at Sugarbush. Surveys are planned for second homeowners and for the Farmer's Market.

Watershed Wide Water Management Plan: Joshua reported that the Taskforce met over the summer, and has started the learning process with a well-attended session on stormwater earlier this month. A Request for Proposals to hire a technical consultant to study stormwater in the MRV was distributed, with responses expected in the coming week. In addition, Dara has been assisting Corrie Miller of Friends of the Mad River with a companion grant application from Lake Champlain Basin Program to fund outreach and education tools.

Next Meeting: October 15, 2015 (third Thursday) at 7PM in the General Wait House conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dara Torre