

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Director's Report
February 2009**

Mad River Valley Path Association

- MRPA held the second of two strategic planning meetings in late January. This second meeting consisted of a review and prioritization of properties along the proposed path, identified actions surrounding landowner outreach, the creation of an ad hoc marketing committee, a discussion concerning fundraising goals, and the creation of a governance ad hoc committee to implement structural changes agreed upon through the strategic planning process and moving forward with the ED hiring process.
- MRPA's online survey for the general public received 73 responses. 82% of the respondents felt that the towns should be contributing to the path. Two areas identified for improvement were signage and maps.
- Attending the MRPA's 2/17 Board meeting.
- MRPA Board Meetings have been changed to the third Tuesday of each month.
- The Town of Warren, MRPA, and MRVPD's VTrans Transportation Enhancement Grant for the purchase of the 3 acre Whiteside parcel is still on hold.

Housing

- Joshua attended the 2/10 meeting of the MRVHC.
- Karen Winchell has continued to make progress on the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition's (MRVHC) accessory apartment project.
- John Donaldson is continuing to make process on a brochure detailing bargain sales/land bank donations.

Mad River Byway

- The Byway Grant application for the Mad River Byway Welcome Center project has been withdrawn due to potential site contamination issues. These issues appear to be minor, but need to be resolved prior to application of funds and transfer of ownership to Warren. Joshua is discussing site investigation options with the listing agent. It is hoped that this work can be completed during the summer months
- Led the Byway committee in a thematic exercise during its January meeting.
- Draft signage has been completed. The committee is working on details, including a '12 Things to Do on the Byway' section.
- The February 27th meeting will include finalizing the Byway maps.

Valley Futures Network

- Facilitated the Steering Group's 2/13 meeting. The discussion included a presentation about a newly created compost facility in Moretown called Grow and a presentation about the VFN mini-grant application process.
- Joshua and Jared attended a series of potluck/reading group meetings on the topic of the Transition Handbook. The series, held by Kinny, were attended by approximately 15 people each time.

Transportation

- The State's online carpooling program, GoVT, will tentatively be released in late March.
- Planning has begun for the Walk 'n Roll festival during the month of May. The festival will coincide with the State's Way to Go events.
- A regional trails group encompassing Central Vermont applied for trail funds to create an online trail network database. Joshua coordinated local groups in this effort and submitted a letter of support for the application.

Energy

- MRVPD received a grant through Efficiency Vermont for the Vermont Community Energy Mobilization Pilot Project. The project is being implemented by MRVPD, LocalVolts and Carbon Shredders. The project organizes community volunteers to directly install low-cost energy saving measures in residences and provide education on ways to reduce home energy costs.
- More than 50 people attended the project's training for all volunteers on 2/9. Home visits will happen on four consecutive weekends in February and March.
- Began discussions with Miron at the Town of Warren regarding a potential planning initiative focusing on E Warren as a pilot for valley commons project. Joshua is exploring funding through EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance grants.
- Joshua will serve as a panelist at a 3/5 VLCT workshop entitled *Putting Energy Planning into Action*.

Data

- Talks have progressed UVM's Center for Rural Studies to analyze and assist in updating MRVPD's data and trends book, required by the MOU. A proposed scope of work and identification of deliverables will be discussed on 2/19.

Forests Wildlife Communities Project Steering Committee

- The FWCP Steering Committee met on 1/29 and discussed next steps for the project, which include public outreach and coordination between Conservation Commissions and VNRC regarding zoning regulation updates required by the recent Jam Golf, Inc court case.

Kingsbury Farm

- Along with Jared, attended the 2/5 "partners" meeting to discuss VT Foodbank's plans for the Farm. VT FB intends to purchase the Farm at the end of March.
- Participated in a discussion regarding goals for the riparian bugger area and recreational trail on Kingsbury Farm. The conversation identified roles and objectives for all of the parties (VLT, FMR, VT FB, MRPA, Warren).

Community Calendar

- Participated in a handful of meetings in an attempt to suss-out details concerning additional improvements to the calendar on the redesigned MRV Chamber website. The proposed changes will incorporate a recurring event option and make the calendar the primary calendar for the Valley.

Sugarbush

- Presented a letter on the project to Sugarbush and attended the 2/3 Act 250 hearing.

Municipal Support

- Met with PC member Brian Fleisher and discussed the proposed "green enterprise hamlet" zoning designation.
- Organized a tri-town meeting of Conservation Commissions on 2/12 to discuss shared objectives and future collaboration. The group found the event helpful and requested another meeting in September.
- Organized a MRV ZA Brown Bag Lunch on 2/4. The group requested that this become a quarterly event.
- Organizing a consortium municipal education grant application to pay for a series of DRB/PC trainings through the spring. The topics being considered are: Technical Review for Development Applications, Land Use Enforcement Options, and Field Guide to Adopting and Amending the Town Plan and Bylaws.

- Waitsfield was one of three communities in Central Vermont to receive a FY09 municipal planning grant. The money will be used to develop and implement a robust community participation element for the creation of their next Town Plan, due in 2010.