

**Mad River Valley Planning District  
Steering Committee  
August 21, 2014**

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectman;  
Waitsfield: Chris Pierson, Selectman; Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner  
Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectman; Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner  
CVRPC: Laurie Emery  
Sugarbush: Margo Wade  
Chamber of Commerce: Steve Butcher  
MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz; Dara Torre  
Mad River Glen:  
Others: John Hoogenboom, Moretown

The minutes of the June 19, 2014 Steering Committee were accepted as amended to reflect that C. Pierson was in attendance.

**Director's Report:** J. Schwartz updated members on the diverse activities in which the Planning District is involved, including: developing a Planning District newsletter from the Director's Report with emphasis on the grants that are available (such as Historic Preservation, pre-disaster mitigation project planning and implementation, transportation enhancements, recreation, USFS community forest grants, Community Development Block Grants-CDBG) and doing outreach to towns to assist where feasible, the VDAT (VT Downtown Action Team) final report should be released in September and ACCD (Agency of Commerce and Community Development) would like to make a presentation to the Valley on the project results, Josh is assisting Warren and Waitsfield with the environmental review requirements for their CDBG grants and each of these grant applications will require a public hearing to discuss the projects and get public input; and Josh is reviewing the Fayston draft Town Plan for flood resiliency strategies.

In discussing branding and tourism promotion in general, S. Butcher stated that four iPad-type kiosks are being developed for visitors and residents so they can have access to local information, including community data, directions to events and attractions, and reasons to visit the Valley.

**Sugarbush Update:** M. Wade reported on the status of the parking lot Act 250 permit, including that Sugarbush has received the local permit, is waiting for the State stormwater operating permit and the Act 250 permit. They are hoping that work can begin this fall. M. Wade also reported that the snowmaking guns at Sugarbush will be replaced with high efficiency guns with some funding from the VT Energy Investment Corporation.

**MRV Economic Summit Survey Update:** D. Torre noted that several more survey responses have come in, that the intake period ended August 1, and that the additional data will be added to the summary. When completed, the final report will be presented in a news article.

**MRV Economy: Vision and Vitality:** Creative arts will be added as a sector based on input received from the Economic Summit. The other sectors include: hospitality, recreation/tourism, professional business services, agriculture and food systems, and innovation/manufacturing.

Metrics are being developed as indicators to share with those in the various sectors, as well as teaching sessions on how to use the metrics and formulate steps for implementation by businesses. The Economic Summit

committee members will establish a process for coordinating and moving forward to implementation. The Economic Summit and associated follow up work are providing great opportunities for the Planning District and Chamber to work together.

**MRV Active-Transportation Plan Draft:** The development of a draft plan for coordination and implementation of active modes of transportation is an outcome of the work done by the Trails Collaborative, development of the Recreation Path Plan, VT Youth Conservation Corps work on the trails, and other groups working on pedestrian and bike-modes of transit. The purpose of the active-transportation plan is to bring people together to see where the community/Valley wants the trail/path network to go. The plan is a mechanism to create a larger vision for the trail network in the Valley. Active-transportation is defined as non-motorized ways to get round the Valley.

**Strong Communities Better Connections (SCBC):** The Agencies of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and Transportation (VTrans) have developed a pilot program to fund partnerships to connect land use and transportation investments in an integrated manner to support community and economic development. The program supports implementation-focused planning initiatives that coordinate land use decisions and transportation investments, advance the Federal Highway livability principles, and support statewide planning and transportation goals and objectives. There could be as much as \$75,000 (plus a 10% local match) available to develop a plan. The process would include an intensive public outreach/community engagement component, an inventory of assets, and the development of strategies for implementation of a unified, watershed-wide vision for recreation trails and non-motorized transportation facilities as they affect economic development, the visitor experience, residents' quality of life, and transportation choices.

It was noted that there could be \$2500 available from the Rotary to support this process. In order to be a watershed-wide product, Moretown would be invited to participate and potentially fund up to \$5,000 of the local match of \$7500. There would also be involvement of the Chamber and some financial participation, as well. The application deadline is October 3, and the applicant must be a municipality with a municipal plan approved by the Regional Planning Commission. Fayston and Moretown are just completing the development of their municipal plans and would not have completed the process in time for the grant application. Waitsfield and Warren have regionally approved plans and could apply as a consortium with supporting letters from the other two towns. However, either Warren or Waitsfield would have to serve as the lead municipality. The lead municipality would have to commit to providing the local match of \$7500 regardless of the source of those funds. Then the funds from the Rotary, Chamber, other towns, etc could be funneled through the lead municipality. The plan would establish priorities within the watershed and strategies for implementing the priorities.

It was queried whether the Towns of Waitsfield and Warren would commit to the project and a match of \$2500 each. Local planning commission support of the project would be wanted and that support shared with the boards of selectmen in order to pursue applying for the funds.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the Town of Warren will be approached to be the lead applicant.

**Sugarbush Chamber of Commerce Update:** The Chamber is looking to increase their budget for event support. Visitors and bookings are up 40% this year.

**Mid-Year MRVPD Update:** Five of this year's work plan projects have been completed and the Forest Wildlife Community project is completed. This project built upon and expanded the work of Valley conservation commissions. Projects not yet started both relate to energy. Another grant application that is forthcoming is for neighborhood area designation for Warren. Other projects on which time is being spent

include: flood resiliency, MRV data report, website, and review of the Fayston draft Town Plan. At the October Steering Committee meeting, we will need to begin work on the FY 16 work plan.

**Other Business:** It was suggested that the Recreation District representatives be asked to meet with the Steering Committee to talk about their overall needs and mission.

It was queried whether the tri-town board of selectmen meeting is still necessary and/or how can we have a broader discussion with the planning commissioners and select board members.

Organizations asking for the same amount of funding could just write a letter rather than attending the tri-town meeting. Those wanting more funding than in the past could make a presentation at the tri-town meeting. One other suggestion is that a threshold be established for needing to present their request or not. It was noted that some select board members prefer to have the individual presentations, but perhaps the presenters could be held to no more than 5 minutes each.

Other ideas included: requesting \$1,000 or less; no need to come to the tri-town board meeting.

If asking for the same amount, then no need to come to the tri-town board meeting.

Have the tri-town board meeting be for presentations by those requesting larger amounts and limit the total time to 45 minutes. Then the board members could meet to discuss the broader issues and priorities, etc.

It was queried why the tri-town meeting isn't four towns. It was also suggested that the boards only hear from the five larger requestors.

It was agreed to have further discussion at the September 18 Steering Committee meeting about the purpose and parameters for the joint board meeting. It was agreed to ask the Recreation District to provide information on their activities and mission at the September 18 meeting, as well.

**Next Meeting:** September 18, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery