

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee**

February 16, 2017, 7:00 P.M.
General Wait House, Waitsfield

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

CVRPC: Eric Vorwald

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz; Kristine Keeney

Guests: Chris Keating, Valley Reporter, Samantha Burns, MRVTV

The meeting opened at 7:00pm. Bob Ackland, Chair, brought the meeting to order. The previous meeting minutes were approved with two changes from Peter MacLaren that included the fact that the Chamber's strategic planning process will result in an 18-month operating plan, not 8 months. There was also a typo in the housing section of the Staff Report portion of the previous minutes.

- a. **Executive Director's Highlights of Staff Report:** J. Schwartz provided the Committee updates on several areas including economic development, transportation, housing, mapping, Sugarbush, agriculture, hazard mitigation, municipal support, and other topics.

Economic Development

- a. MRV Economic Dashboard
 - i. Kristine and Bob met with several members of the Chamber Board and Jasmine on 2/10 to see a presentation by IBM about their Waston Analytics program that could help with data analysis and visualization for the MRV Economic Dashboard in the future. Joshua, Kristine, and Bob then met with Jasmine and Chamber Board Chair Amy Todisco to discuss next steps on moving forward in partnership to improve and complete the Dashboard data collection and reporting.
 - ii. Jasmine explained that she does not think the Chamber can take over the Dashboard in the near term, and that April would be a more likely time to migrate responsibilities. She also wants to do this at the same time that a new system for data collection and reporting is implemented.
 - iii. Kristine, Joshua, and Jasmine will be meeting again next months to get closer to a partnership that works going forward.

Transportation

- a. Mad Bus
 - i. GMT provided an update on ridership for January- unfortunately there was a major drop in ridership on the SnowCap Commuter route compared to December (there is no obvious reason for this drop considering it's success in December). However, every other route was up since December.
 - ii. Ridership for all routes is higher than the 2015/2016 service season, however, only ridership on two routes are up compared to the 2014/2015 service season. The group will continue to monitor ridership data as the service season progresses.

- iii. MRVPD, GMT, Chamber, and Sugarbush have been putting in a lot of work to get the word out about the Mad Bus. However, GMT has informed us that the SnowCap is on life support for next season.
- b. Moretown Bridge Replacement
 - i. Joshua let the group know that the MRVPD informed Waitsfield Town Administrator that it is important to get in touch with VTrans early in the process regarding traffic mitigation for local detoured traffic during the bridge replacement project.
- c. Sugarbush Access Road Path Scoping Study
 - i. Kristine and Joshua have continued to provide comments as the final drafts of the Scoping Study reports are finalized.
 - ii. A final public meeting was held on 2/14 and the Warren Selectboard endorsed the studies contingent on edits. The topic will not be on the agenda at the next selectboard meeting.
 - iii. Peter MacLaren asked what the next steps are for this project; Kristine explained that it is in the hands of the Warren selectboard to let the MRVPD know if they would like to pursue grant funding for design and construction.
- d. CVRPC TAC Meeting 2/28 & Paving Priorities
 - i. Meeting on 2/28 will be dealing with VTrans paving priorities.
 - ii. Joshua explained that the MRVPD was given a VTrans “Top 50 District Paving Candidates for Ranking” map and it does not include eastern portion of Route 17. Kristine is working with CVRPC to determine whether or not Route 17 falls on the reconstruction list.
 - iii. Kristine is planning on attending the upcoming meeting to advocate for Route 17 as a paving priority for the region, but Joshua pointed out the fact that she does not have a vote, so it’s important that reps from the individual towns attend the meeting as well.

Housing

- a. MRV Housing Study 2017
 - i. It was on the agenda for Kristine to present the recommendations of the updated Housing Study, however, there was not enough time to complete the presentation. This topic will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting and the final version will be available by Town Meeting as well.
- b. MRV Housing Coalition
 - ii. At the latest meeting on 2/9, the group discussed an energy efficiency grant opportunity. MRVPD will be following up with partners in the Valley that may be interested in applying.
- c. Tiny Houses
 - iii. Joshua gave the group an overview of the amount of people who have reached out to the MRVPD since the Valley Reporter published an article about potential tiny houses in the Valley. Kristine will be following up with them with an invite to the next Housing Coalition meeting to discuss the topic. Kristine will be facilitating conversations between stakeholders, Waitsfield ZA, and other partners on 2/14 related to tiny houses in the Valley.

Sugarbush

- a. Kristine, Joshua, Margo, and Dan Currier had a conversation about the traffic counter at the intersection of Route 17 & Route 100. The counter is not currently working and Dan is working with VTrans to get someone out there to better diagnose the problem. Jim mentioned that it is unfortunate that the counter is not working ahead of the President’s Day weekend.

Agriculture

- a. Joshua is providing a history of MRVPD and a tour of the MRV on 2/16 to a contingent of agriculture and conservation representatives visiting VT from Montana.
- b. Joshua provided assistance on a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) for Mad River Taste, a new regional tasting center.

Hazard Mitigation

- a. FEMA Region I has completed its review of Waitsfield's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was submitted 2-3 years ago.

Other

- a. Kristine has been working to acquire all of the needed data to work with Waitsfield resident Iliyan Deskov to update GIS maps created in 2010 by Stone Environmental that identified well shield locations and wastewater options within the Waitsfield municipal water service area. This work will be foundational for both affordable housing and for Irasville infill potential.
 - a. Waitsfield Town Administrator has since expressed interest in GIS data and mapping of the municipal water system. MRVPD will provide this map to the town once the wastewater portion of the project is completed.
- b. Joshua assisted the Town of Warren with an RFP for a consultant to help them with the upcoming Town Plan update.
- c. Kristine will be providing a letter of support to the Town of Warren for the Better Back Roads program to help offset the cost to the Town for stormwater infrastructure related to the Warren Main Street Improvement Project.
- d. Act 250
 - a. There were two residential Act 250 permits in the last month that Joshua reviewed.

b. New Business

- a. 2016 MRV Data Report
 - i. Kristine did a presentation to the group that went over a majority of the updated data and charts that will be included in the final version of the 2016 MRV Data Report. It will be available in print by Town Meeting.
- b. CVRPC Regional Energy Plan Survey
 - i. Joshua planned to go through the survey with the entire Steering Committee, but Jim Sanford said that it took the Warren Planning Commission about an hour to complete.
 - ii. Eric Vorwald explained that it is important for the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Conservation & Energy Committees from each town to complete the survey. Several members of the group expressed a need for additional time. Eric suggested that each board or committee nominate one person to complete the survey, and then discuss their results with the other members before submitting their final answers.
 - iii. Responses are due by March 6th. The MRVPD Steering Committee will be discussing and completing the survey at its upcoming meeting on March 16th. CVRPC is aware of the late submission.

c. Old Business

- a. Community Vitality Project Update
 - i. Bob said that the group is making progress but there has been some frustration among members who want to act sooner rather than later. Bob explained that you have to have a foundation from which to work from in order to move forward. The group is trying to establish that now and will be reaching out to people in the recreation industry to get a better handle on what they have done in their communities. Some people in the group just

want to make a brochure, but Bob does not think that's going to be effective and that if a brochure is going to be made, it should likely come from the Chamber.

- ii. Margo pointed out that the group has not addressed the issue of funding for the MRVPD. Bob acknowledged this issue and said that he has not forgotten that the group promised to come up with a solution to the problem in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Keeney