

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting of February 18, 2010
7pm at General Wait House, Waitsfield**

Present:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectman; Chuck Martel, Planning Commissioner

Waitsfield: Bill Parker, Selectman; Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner

Warren: Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Jim Halavonich

Sugarbush: Jason Lisai

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz

Others: None

Directors Report: Josh advised the MRPA had hired Autumn Foushee as the new part-time Executive Director of the Path and that he had met with her to discuss issues and plans.

Installation of kiosks for the Mad River Byway project is progressing and it is expected that they will be installed in May. The Waitsfield Energy Committee is researching a possible biomass heating option for the Wait House/Fire Station/Elementary School and is seeking grant funding to do a feasibility study. If supported by the Waitsfield Selectboard, funds will be sought for a preliminary feasibility study through the VT Clean Energy Development Fund's Municipal Technical Assistance Grant program. There is an upcoming trail summit on 3/10 in Warren to get as many groups working on trail issues together to discuss trail issues, further the online trail map project, and funding for trail maintenance. Josh noted that transfer of the Flemer polo field to the town of Waitsfield had been completed and the Town is planning a small fruit orchard on part of the property. Josh is assisting in preparing a grant application for this project. Waitsfield Telecom is applying for an ARRA grant to provide an advanced high-speed internet system and Josh and the Mad River Chamber assisted with the application.

Law Enforcement Summit: The recent law enforcement summit was discussed. It was noted that it was helpful to get information about the costs of local police departments from Stowe and Hinesburg. There is some public dissatisfaction with the level of law enforcement provided by the Washington County Sheriffs Dept. due to limited powers but the cost of a local police department seems prohibitive at this time.

Due to the State's financial situation, the Fish & Wildlife Technical Assistance group faces elimination. This group, which consists of Jens Hilke and Jane Lazorchak, has provided valuable assistance to the Valley towns in supporting the collection of wildlife resources database as well as disseminating this information in the communities. It was suggested that individual towns may want to contact their legislators or otherwise advocate for the continuation of this group at Fish & Wildlife.

Josh recently attended an agriculture & economy talk and as a result he recently did some research into what some other towns have done to broaden the definition of allowed products sold at farm stands that Towns could consider. Many towns as well as the State definition of agriculture currently limit the products that can be sold from farms stands.

Josh advised that the process of updating town plans every five years was not variable in respect to the number of years but that a town could adopt a plan and then choose to update it after the 2010 census or at any other time prior to the end of the five year period in order to include more current information or reflect other changes it desired to make.

GMTA – Josh noted that the proposed plan to merge GMTA into CCTA was progressing. Jason noted that since Sugarbush can't serve on the CCTA Board there was concern about losing an effective voice in respect to GMTA services. Josh suggested a committee to discuss an effective voice can be maintained and Margo and Jim Halavonich volunteered for the committee. Josh will organize a meeting in early March.

Jason noted that Sugarbush was actively seeking financing and working on revisions to Phase 1B of its development at the Lincoln Peak base area in the hopes of being able to proceed later this year.

MRVPD workplan: Josh reviewed everyone's comments and suggestions and noted that there was a consensus to address the updating of the MOU now that the data project was completed. Jason reiterated Sugarbush's desire to reduce its financial commitment in light of the MRVPD's activities and workplan. There was general discussion of ways to involve other businesses. Josh also noted that the ongoing data plan needs to be established.

Josh also noted that Inter-town collaboration and municipal support to town boards, zoning administrators as well as grant assistance were priorities.

A new project this year is to work on investigating and organizing an entrepreneurial food & agricultural initiative for the Mad River Valley in order to build upon the localvore effort and further economic development of agricultural businesses.

Another focus is to coordinate the various energy related initiatives and groups in the Valley, while exploring Valley-wide projects with a focus on developing MRV Energy Plan, Energy Wiki, and small-scale biomass

Next MRVPD meeting is rescheduled for WEDNESDAY 3/24/10 @ 7pm.

Respectively submitted by Steve Shea