

**Mad River Valley Planning District
Steering Committee
May 21, 2015**

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectman; Carol Chamberlin, Planning Commissioner

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectman;

CVRPC: Laurie Emery

Sugarbush: Adam Greshin

Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz

Mad River Glen:

Others: Luke Yaemell, Warren Selectman; Patricia Floyd; John Boyer, Washington County Youth Bureau; Sasha Bianchi, Department of Health.

The minutes of the April 9, 2015 Steering Committee were accepted as written.

Substance Abuse Prevention in the Mad River Valley: The Department of Health and the Washington County Youth Bureau are reaching out to the community to see how to reach and inform the youth population on alcohol abuse prevention. The statistics based on a recent survey of Harwood Union High School students show that 43% have consumed alcohol. Parents have expressed their concerns about youth drinking and are interested in finding a better alternative for coping with life's challenges. Lamoille County Planning Commission, through a Healthy Communities grant, developed a primer on "Planning for Prevention" tying land use planning into substance abuse prevention. The primer helps to shape the conversation and begin a dialogue between the community and planners. The Department of Health and the Washington County Youth Bureau are interested in developing a primer for the Mad River Valley and advocating that making the "healthy choice is the easy choice." The primer recommends both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches, including holding substance-free events and finding places and opportunities for the youth to spend time that would be productive. It is hoped that these kinds of approaches would help to change the culture to drinking is not okay. The Planning District is being asked to consider how they could help promote some of the recommendations in the primer. The primer recommends language that could be incorporated into town plans. It was queried whether anyone knows why the youth of the Valley are higher users of alcohol than those in other parts of Vermont. It was suggested that this program be brought to the leaders in the school system and supervisory union. It was also suggested that during the development of the Active-Transportation Plan it may be appropriate to address some of these issues and ideas.

Super System Map: The business map of the Planning District's structure, members, customers, etc was reviewed with several edits suggested. Once the business map for the Sugarbush Chamber of Commerce has been developed, it will be used to see where the gaps are in terms of serving the needs of the Valley.

MRF Active-Transportation Plan: This was initiated as a recreation plan with a transportation focus. It is being funded through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Agency of Transportation. It will contain a vision for recreational non-motorized transportation. A consultant will be selected by the end of June.

There is a need for an inventory of recreational opportunities in the Valley, including paths, and it had been hoped that the Recreation District would develop the inventory. It would be good to see the Recreation District be more involved and participate in this process, but it's not certain that they have the resources.

The Active-Transportation Plan will help to identify what needs to be done and by whom in terms of the non-motorized recreational opportunities in the Valley. It was agreed to have a meeting of the Valley towns' boards of selectmen once the Active-Trans Plan consultants have started to identify the needs and important pieces.

Vision and Vitality: The group is moving forward with workshops that will start July 15 for ten weeks with ten segments of the economy being addressed. The next economic forum will be held in November.

Executive Director's Report: J. Schwartz is meeting with the planning commissions of each of the Valley towns to discuss the economic summit process and next steps. The two Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery projects (Warren streetscape and Waitsfield pocket park) are moving forward as grant conditions are met. The MRV watershed-wide storm water management project is planning the next steps. The application to the High Meadows Fund has been submitted. The Steering Committee needs to have a discussion about the role and responsibilities of the Planning District in grants.

The Vermont Department of Labor just announced that the geographical make up of the labor market area has been changed. The Towns of Waitsfield, Warren, Fayston, and Moretown will now be included with the Town of Northfield. This will make it difficult for data comparison with previous years' economic data, but J. Schwartz believes he can find a way to segregate the data for the purposes of the Planning District's needs and data report.

The first MRVPD e-newsletter was sent out this week. It will be a quarterly newsletter. Kudos to Dara for excellent work.

J. Schwartz met with Bonnie Waninger, the new Executive Director of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, to discuss the mission and role of both groups.

J. Schwartz and D. Torre are paid through the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's payroll which could be interpreted that they are CVRPC employees. The Planning District reimburses CVRPC monthly for the payroll costs. The assistance provided by CVRPC to the Planning District should be reviewed as we go into the future and be formalized with a written agreement.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 18, 2015. We will need to decide whether to hold meetings in July or August.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery