

Steering Committee
Mad River Valley Planning District
Minutes
April 28, 2011

Present were:

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

Waitsfield: Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectman;

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Jim Halavonich

Sugarbush: Margo Wade, Jason Lisai

CVRPC: Laurie Emery

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz

Others: Jamie Wimble, Mad River Glen; Laura Brines, Autumn Foushee, Mad River Path Assoc; Adam Greshin, Legislative Representative

Mad River Path Assoc: The Association is implementing “wags for bags” (doggie waste stations) along the Path, and is holding a festival July 16 that will also be a dog show. The Board is also researching a location for an off-leash section of the Path with sites in Warren and Waitsfield being evaluated. Laura and Autumn also expressed their appreciation for their wonderful group of positive volunteers. The Path Board is also working with the Waitsfield select board on an open space tax stabilization agreement that will be available to all landowners with open space easements. Waitsfield is investigating the impact on the tax rate for the Town and all are aiming for a final draft in November to bring to the voters at March Town Meeting 2012.

The tax stabilization agreement needs to serve the mission of the Path Assoc, and landowners would have to give an easement in order to receive a 50% reduction in their municipal tax. If the easement is only a license, then the percent stabilization would be 35%. The agreements would also have to co-exist with any Current Use agreements on the involved land. It's yet to be decided how the agreements will be set up so they only apply to the Path area and not the whole parcel. However, aesthetically, perhaps the stabilization agreement should apply to the whole parcel in which the Path section exists. It could then be more of an alternative transportation usage. The easements would be permanent, as well. The Path Board members are working with Waitsfield as a test case before approaching the other towns. May 27 is the Mad River Path Association's landowner appreciation party with pizza and music. The Association currently has over 250 members, including many new members, which is ahead of last year's number at this time. Last year's final number was 400.

Vermont Legislation: Adam Greshin reviewed the work of the Legislature, including discussion on the health care bill, net metering, current use, the State's energy plan, and permit reform.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 17, 2011 meeting of the Steering Committee were accepted as written. There was no meeting in March 2011.

Director's Report: A few of the activities of the past month include: Waitsfield Village bank stabilization funding, low impact development storm water treatment research project, tour of the MRV for the Commissioner of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, VECAN grant funding (awarded) from the “Building the Power of VT Communities to Increase Energy Efficiency and Reduce Climate Change Impacts,.” GMTA/CCTA transition, Mad River Food Hub assistance, Forest Wildlife Community project, decentralized wastewater research, MRV Trail Collaborative, MRV Data Report distribution, and presentation

of the Data Report to MRV Chamber's Economic Development Committee.

VT Working Landscape Plan: The Farm to Plate program and distribution of local food is a piece of the sustainability of our landscape, and is so noted in the VT Working Landscape Plan developed by the Vermont Council on Rural Development.

Ski Area News: Mad River Glen and Sugarbush both reported having excellent seasons and that skier visits increased. Sugarbush also reported that summer reservations to date are up from this time last year.

Mad River Chamber News: The Chamber is pulling out of the business tax program which means there is a loss of 70% of the Chamber's event funding. The Chamber will be re-evaluating their mission and organizational structure, and will be asking all businesses what it is they need the Chamber to do.

GMTA and Mad Bus: The Valley TAC met and agreed to get more participation on the bus routes, especially the Valley floor route, in order to increase ridership so the routes aren't lost. MRV will probably lose the Warren shuttle due to the lack of ridership. The TAC will work to keep the funds for this route in the Valley, but VTrans wants to use the funds elsewhere. If the Valley loses the funds, it could have an impact on the Sugarbush match that they will provide. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to evaluate the cost of each route, the ridership, etc and present that to the Steering Committee and provide the evaluation to the lodging businesses. In addition, it would be good to look at other ski resorts to see how their bus service compares. It would also be good to know the change in traffic over time for the Route 17 and German Flats intersection.

Election of Officers: It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to continue with the existing officers; those being J. Cadwell as Chair, Jim Sanford as Vice-chair, and C. Martel as Treasurer/Secretary.

Next Meeting: The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet next on May 19, 2011, the third Thursday.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery