

Steering Committee
Mad River Valley Planning District
Minutes
November 18, 2010

Present were:

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

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

Warren: Bob Ackland, Selectman; Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner

MRV Chamber of Commerce: Jim Halavonich

Sugarbush:

CVRPC: Laurie Emery

MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz

Others: Laura Brines, Dan Holtz, Mad River Path Assn;

The minutes of the October 21, 2010 meeting were accepted as written.

Mad River Path Association: L. Brines and D. Holtz discussed the progress being made on the possibility of a leash-free dog park or area on the Path or in close proximity, and that a committee has been formed to pursue resolution to the issue of unleashed dogs on the path. The goal is to have a path where dogs could be off-leash. After further discussion, members of the Steering Committee expressed their support for the concept, and suggested that the Path Assn figure out the details and work with the town planning commissions and conservation commissions on defining the solution.

Director's Report: The following are a few of the many activities and projects that involve the MRVPD. For more details, please see the full Director's Report. Housing: The Mad River Valley Housing Coalition is exploring a potential affordable housing site as part of the upcoming Valley affordable land initiative. This site is on German Flats Road and is owned by Sugarbush. Transportation: The Mad River Byway interpretive signage is being installed where sites are ready and will be completed in the spring. Regarding the Waitsfield sidewalk project for the west side of Main Street, a public forum was held, and J. Schwartz will be meeting with the VTrans right-of-way Chief and the Town to explore issues related to historic structures and signage within the State's ROW. Valley Futures Network: The groups involved in the Local Community Initiatives are working on a local food market study, Mad River Path Assn interpretive materials, and the Mad Bikes program. Agriculture: The Planning District is seeking funding for a Valley food system mapping project that will identify the Valley's assets, gaps, relationships, and provide a structure for enhancing the Valley's agricultural economy. Miscellaneous: MRVPD is applying for funds for an E-Vermont Community Broadband project on behalf of the Town of Waitsfield. The proposal focuses on creating an online forum and other broadband tools to increase civic involvement. MRVPD assisted the Health Center in securing a \$17,500 grant to fund renovations. A MRV zoning administrators' brown bag lunch was held on November 3 with discussion focused on statutory conformance and an opportunity for future build out analyses.

General discussion identified the suggestion of focusing a Steering Committee meeting on business development in the Valley and how the various projects interrelate in this regard.

Energy: MRVPD has applied for a VT Community Foundation (VCF) grant to define an energy vision for the Valley. It would develop an inventory by energy use by town and by sector, explore renewable energy opportunities, and hold forums to discuss these opportunities and identify community-wide issues and outcomes. An initial presentation is scheduled for December 7 on "What do we know about our

energy consumption.” Presenters will provide fact-based information on energy consumption and available renewable options for the Valley. It was suggested that this discussion will need a moderator who has a balanced perspective. Initially, the Valley Futures Network was the host, but it was suggested that MRVPD be the host so that no individual or group feels they are being excluded from the presentation.

FY 2012 MRVPD Budget: The budget committee of the Steering Committee met to review the proposed budget and is recommending a budget that maintains the current level of dues with revenue of \$93,948 and expenditures of \$87,683. The resulting fund balance would be carried forward to the FY 13 budget. Projecting forward to FY 13, level dues will leave a fund balance of only \$330 for FY 14. It was suggested that since the pragmatic work done with the towns is so important, we will need to ask for an increase in the dues for the future unless there is some other source that becomes available. It was noted that dialog is continuing with Sugarbush on what they need from the Planning District. The review of the MOU is still being worked on by Sugarbush.

It was suggested that if there is a way to save more on health insurance, the savings could translate into an additional salary increase for the Director. In reviewing the 7.5% increase in health insurance and the data presented by Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, it was stated that the current health insurance through CVRPC is the most economical at this time. MVP’s premium rates are not increasing dramatically except for the 2 person rate. However, the coverage requires co-pays and a maximum out of pocket of \$7,000 for a family versus the current Blue Cross high deductible health savings coverage maximum out of pocket of \$4,000. Health insurance through the VT League of Cities and Towns is increasing by 17% for January 2011. Other quotes show increases from 13% to 20%.

It was moved and seconded to approve the FY 12 budget as proposed. The question was raised about getting input on the budget from Sugarbush. After further discussion, it was voted to table the motion until the December 16 meeting of the Steering Committee.

Other Business: J. Schwartz spoke with A. Greshin about the next legislative session and the redistricting possibilities based on the 2010 Census.

A representative of Mad River Glen is expected to attend the December 16, 2010 Steering Committee meeting.

Next Meeting: The Steering Committee will meet again December 16, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery