

Steering Committee
Mad River Valley Planning District
Minutes
September 16, 2011

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Selectmen; Chuck Martel, Planning Commissioner
Waitsfield:; Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner
Warren: Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner
MRV Chamber of Commerce:
Sugarbush: Margo Wade, Hardy Merrill, Win Smith
CVRPC: Laurie Emery
MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz
Others:

The minutes of the July 21, 2011 Steering Committee were approved as written.

Director's Report: J. Schwartz summarized the written Director's Report and pointed out several projects of the last month, including: that the MRV energy series first event on local energy history and the foundation of our energy future was postponed (and rescheduled for September 12) in order to deal with flood recovery issues. One hundred and twenty people attended the flood recovery meeting and The Big Picture Theater waived the venue fee. Joshua continues to coordinate the Emergency Watershed Protection Program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. It's been announced that hazard mitigation grant program (FEMA) funding has been released for communities affected by the flood. Waitsfield and Warren are working on interim flood plain regulations in order to expedite reconstruction. The Department of Public Service has released the draft 2011 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan; comments are due in mid-October. The Mad River Path received extensive damage from the August 28 flooding and those sections are currently closed. The 3rd installment of the Local Community Initiatives course will be happening this fall. The topics to be addressed are: compost power, PACE, Mad River Valley Health Center, and MRV solar farm.

Flood Recovery Updates: Members briefed each other on the status of road and bridge repairs and noted that the personnel of the Agency of Natural Resources have been very helpful in getting permits for the various projects. People were asked to be sure all understand that Bridge Street, Waitsfield, is open despite the covered bridge being closed for the time being. In further discussion, it was identified that the key question is how to maintain the character of our villages while keeping them safe from future flooding. Several suggestions were made including the addition of flood shutters on windows of at-risk buildings. Other discussion focused on how river management should be done; will dredging make some other place be at risk for flooding? Is there something that can be done through new or improved technology or some ways to allow for "wider" water flow when the volume is increased without also increasing the force of the water and causing damage downstream or elsewhere?

Sugarbush Update: The snowmaking pond repairs and recovery will be costly, but the River has been placed back into its natural course, gravel and mud will be excavated from the pond, and the pond will have to refill itself. However, the pond repair will be completed by November 1 and snowmaking will be able to begin on time. The Mt Ellen pond had some damage, but the mountain held up very well due to the amount of culvert and water bar work that has been done in the last several years.

Season pass sales are very strong already. Sugarbush is raising funds for the MRV Community Fund.

CVRPC Update on Co-location: It was reported that a number of different office sites for rental are being looked at in case the RPC and Central VT Economic Development decide that services would be enhanced by co-locating. The ultimate issue is whether the RPC's members (towns) and the CVEDC's members (businesses and towns) would be better served if both organizations were under one roof. If not, then the cost of moving wouldn't be warranted.

Relief Headquarters in Waitsfield: Of the 1300 volunteer hours recorded to date, only 40% is booked to the Waitsfield town work. Waitsfield is suggesting that they hire a program coordinator to match volunteer skills with need and do the associated paperwork. Waitsfield is not asking to use the time of the Planning District Executive Director, but is looking to no longer fund the work being done at headquarters for other towns that is being staffed by Waitsfield staff. It was recognized that there needs to be a point person leading the coordination into the next stage of recovery assistance.

Next Meeting: The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet next on October 20, 2011, the third Thursday.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery