

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

September 09, 2019

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Tom Schnabel (Absent), Pat Harvey

Guests: Martha Slater, Frank Russell, Jeffrey Friedman, Janice Melvin, Nancy Woolley, Walt Wells, Joan Allen, John Champion, Tony Goupee, Christian Pellitier, Vic & Sue Ribaud, Jenna Kollski, Burma Cassidy, David Harvey, Kevin Kelly, Harland McKirryher, Rachel Cunningham, Chris Mattrick, Marvin & Barb Harvey, Carolyn Cruikshank, Deb Moore, Mason Wade with Orca Media

Doon called the meeting at 6:15 pm

Doon confirmed the open meeting law conformity

Additions: Chris Mattrick-Mason requested information about the new rules to federal projects. Walt Wells-comment about Harvest Fair. Mason Wade- Climate change and addressing the generator for the town and Park House. Jenna Kollski-VT Council and Rural Development

Doon moved to approve the selectboard meeting minutes from August 23, 2019. Pat seconded. So, voted.

Chris Mattrick responded to the group with a brief summary of an explanation to Mason's request about the public comment period. Chris explained how the Nation Forest uses Environmental analyses to conduct project analysis to look at the outcome of what those projects were from a decision point of view. He explained that when you produce an environmental analysis, the outcome you either find the significant effect to a resource or there is not a significant effect. He continued that if you don't find a significant effect to a project, that allows the project to move forward. There's not a significant effect on the ground. Another category of analysis is called the categorical exclusions. Chris described that category as not in-depth analysis. The rules were changed to allow more categorical exclusions to some of those projects that repeatedly had findings of no significant impact such as road building, road decommissioning, repair and maintenance of recreational facilities, special use permit issuances, restoration projects, watershed and forest restoration projects. Chris explained that under the categorical exclusions they don't require the same level of analysis and they don't require the same amount of number of public opportunities to comment on those projects. He explained that it doesn't mean there's not an opportunity to comment, he explained that typically its at the discretion of the line officer. Chris noted that some of the messaging that created confusion because the language to read the federal registrar is very dense. He summed it up in a short sentence that locally you will not see any change in the opportunity to comment on forest service projects that the public has had in the past. In any local projects he assured that he would put out a scoping period of what ever common period to the complexity of that project. Discussion ensued and questions were answered.

Christian Pellitier, program coordinator at White River Partnership spoke about the stormwater project going on down at the Town Garage. He explained the scope of the project and where the project is currently. He explained that the projects highlight is installing a Hydrodynamic Separator. He explained that its purpose is to spin a lot of the sediment from the stormwater and settle out. It will capture the sediment when the stormwater is traveling to the river. There will be an installation of a couple catch basins, dry well and a manhole as a new infrastructure to collect that water and bring it over to the

separator. Christian explained that there was a pre-bid meeting that day. Two contractors were present for that meeting. He noted that there is a tight schedule with an end date of mid-October. Bids are due next Monday.

Rachel spoke on behalf of Envision Rochester. Rachel is the Co-founder of Envision Rochester. She noted that she was giving a brief presentation and a more substantive proposal to the board. Rachel explained to the board that they are an independent group of residents, business owners and volunteers dedicated to building a more vibrant and resilient local economy. She noted that they have a history that they shared in previous gatherings. She noted how fundamentally it all started with Sue Ribaldo and herself asking "How can we help the right hand know what the left hand is doing?" She noted that they were thinking of the community calendar as an initiative to kick off a way to unite community resources and volunteers. She noted that was when a series of meetings took place and what followed was an outpouring of ideas, suggestions and a sense of urgency that something needs to be done to put Rochester back on the map to attract young families and new businesses to sustain our town and preserve our unique roll in the White River Valley. She noted that their mission is to clearly organize work and resources to help build a more vibrant and resilient Rochester economy. She noted that if endorsed by the selectboard, envision Rochester plans to build on momentum, broaden the network and identify potential partnership and collaborations with our neighboring towns across the White River Valley.

Vic Ribaldo spoke about how the residents came together and spoke about what they love about Rochester and what might place the long-term future of Rochester in jeopardy. Vic spoke about how the population is slowly aging and shrinking. He noted with the high school closing last year and that normal cost to operate town services are outpacing growth of municipal tax payers. He noted that these kinds of events suggest the town's leaning toward fragility and possible decline which threatens the vitality of local businesses, our remaining school and quality of life. He noted that he thinks the town has a choice to either do nothing and let this risky scenario play out or work for change. He noted he chose to work for change and start the initiative they call Envision Rochester. Vic discussed how there have been several community discussions and with that a lot of brainstorming came out of that. He noted including discussions about building affordable housing, creating tax incentives for local businesses, creating a multi-town river walk trail, attracting new businesses and jobs and restoring the amount of hunting and fishing to a plentiful level that used to be in the past. He noted that their vision is to place Rochester in an economically sound footing with existing and new businesses. He noted a high quality of life that is desirable for permanent residents and second home residents and tourists alike. He noted that they seek to encourage and enable the community to determine that exact nature of that vision and what it really means from concrete changes from today. He suggested this could be accomplished by a community wide visioning and goal setting processes. He noted that based on the vision they have some short-term goals they hope to accomplish. He noted six in all. First, was to what to see happen in six to twelve months. Secondly, to organize and lead a community wide consensus building process that results in a shared vision. Next, they would obtain an expert private consultant to help guide and facilitate this process. He noted following that envisioning work, to organize a community wide consensus building process that results in shared goals and priorities to achieve them. He noted that gaining the partnership with Vermont Council Rural Development would begin to play a role in this work, as a guide and facilitator and coach. He noted that following a goal and priority setting work, create implementation teams imposed of local volunteers partnering with staff from the relevant and

regional state agency. He noted that they would work and create and execute work plans. Fourthly, work with and monitor and support implementation teams and report progress periodically to the Rochester community. Fifthly, he noted establish a private not for profit entity that can seek grants and private donations to foster implementation of economic development goals. Lastly, he noted the sixth to explore neighboring towns where there might be areas of mutual interest and benefit. Then median term looking out 1-3 years, he noted once we have a base of decisions made about what future ought to look like and priority goals to create and execute a branding and marketing strategy to help propel economic growth and to continue to implement work. Vic noted long term, what they hope to see happen is that the downward slide in populations is reversed and population growth takes place to a level that maintains our cherished small-town scale. He noted there is a maximum to that but unknown to what that level is. He noted that they would like to see annual property tax increases that are enough to meet the towns needs and don't exceed the rate of inflation. He noted that they would like to see new appropriate businesses open and create new jobs. He noted that they would like to see an attraction of young families with affordable housing and affordable daycare. He noted that they would like to see the school academically excellent and maintaining high enrollment. He also noted that tourism would flourish and grow. Vic suggested in pursuit to this agenda they need the help and expertise that the Vermont Council and Rural Development could offer and respectfully request the selectboard invite them here to work with them. He noted that they also ask the selectboard recognize Envision Rochester as the lead organization to work with Vermont Council to plan and implement their programs.

Jenna Kollski introduced herself as the Community and Policy Manager with Vermont Council and Rural Development. Jenna noted that she brought along a list of the board members to give a sense of who they are to share and a little bit about the Community Visit Program. She noted that VCRD is a mutual facilitator of public process in Vermont. She continued that they are authorized by the Federal Farm bill as a convener of public process without authority of any sort. She noted an independent non-profit organization and they get their funding from various funding sources. She noted what the Federal Farm bill allows them to have a unique board structure that really provides the backbone of the work that they do. The board is made up of several members of the governor's cabinet, no intention of what party they are from. She noted that they are a non-partisan organization. She noted they have representatives from federal agencies, the Vermont Community Foundation, several non-profits, community leaders, businesses and several representatives from all three congressional offices. She noted that the structures give them a unique connection and perspective on rural Vermont. She noted that they work with communities all around the state for the last 20 years. She noted they support 70 different towns through this community visit process. She noted that they work at the state level, so when working with towns they add up the trends, what is important and what issues are affecting rural Vermont and then they have state wide policy conversations about that as well. She noted that the core of their work is at the community level where they facilitate community conversations. She noted that they have met with Envision Rochester and noted that they seem to have great vision for the work that they do in the community. She noted that they work for the community and not just a group in particular. She noted the importance of working with the selectboard and that they only work when invited. She noted it is important for them to know that the process must support a community as a whole. She explained to the group what a community visit entails. She essentially noted that it is a 4-month series of public meetings. She noted its all about connecting the whole community together to identify common goals and initiatives and choose priorities of what is most important to the community today and to build

action plans to implement those priorities. She noted that they understand that the Towns have Town Plans that are critical to future of the town. They prioritize in small amounts to take action towards those goals. She noted that the process works in a 3-step way. The first step in the process is something that they call Community Visit Day. It's a celebration of the community but also a lot of business with work to be done. It's a series of forums throughout the afternoon and evening including a community dinner. She noted it's an invitation for towns people to come out and participate in the series of brainstorming discussions. She noted it has a great turn out with a deep invitation process to invite all different people from the community. She noted on that Community Visit. She noted that after that day they do a cluster analysis of all the ideas that came up. She said they find common goals for the big ideas and come back a month later and hold another meeting with the community and walk through a voting process of these ideas. She noted that people will sign up for task forces to work towards those initiatives that were voted on. The goal of that day is come to a list of three goals and a list of those who will sign up to work on them. The next meeting, the final meeting is called the Resource Day is actually an action planning day. She said it essentially acts as first meeting of the task forces that are formed. They bring with them another group to help them move forward with the actions. She noted that all information is kept and brought back to the community in a report. She noted that their fundamental values and principles in the work that they do is that when community is really identified what's most important and line up from the ground up to get things done really incredible things can be accomplished. She noted that she has had conversation with Envision Rochester about potential for that process in our town. She noted that this process is free of charge to the communities except for a couple things to help out with like the dinner and mailings. She noted that there is a waiting list of communities that are looking to bring this process to their town and that they are committed out fairly far in terms with the communities that are board has decided to offer the process to. She noted that there a few options for our town at this time. She noted that potentially inviting a full process, in which case we have an advisory committee that decide where we go with the process next and that could go into 2021 until they could commit to another community beyond the list that they already have. They also do work with communities in a shorter-term way. She noted especially where the community already decided on a couple areas they really want to work. She noted that they could work in a two-month process that helps to identify priorities and then build action plans or connect to resources. She noted there is a more limited way they can work together which can be helpful in some communities where maybe they don't need as big of a vision in conversation but have some issue areas they want to work on, and can do a targeted process to get to action with those things. She also mentioned that their advisory committee which consists of representative from USDA of Rural Development, from Vermont Community Foundation we have a deep partnership with. Discussion ensued and questions were asked. Doon asked if the abbreviated version could be an initiative step towards the bigger process or is it a separate piece. She noted that she thought it could be. Vic spoke and noted that they were working with a consultant that is currently working with other towns including Bethel and Woodstock. He thought perhaps they could undertake the visioning, front end of it first, with a private consultant and then bring in VT Council in the second stage on a limited basis. He thought there could be a way and they are exploring how to do this both with a consultant and then with the agency about how we could put something together to make it work. Doon asked if the Envision group is more interested in the shorter program with VT Council. Rachel agreed that they were in fact. Doon asked what kind of schedule they are on for the fast tract programs. Jenna explained that if the selectboard were to decide to endorse Envision Rochester and continue their work with Rebecca, the consultant then they would bring it back

to their board for approval and see what the time lines look like for both groups to collaborate. Patty asked if they could explain who Rebecca is, guessing she is the private consultant and where would the funding come from. Rachel answered that Rebecca Sanborn Stone will be offering on Oct. 2, a free very detailed workshop with Envision Rochester's steering committee, with the selectboard approval to help hit the floor running. Vic spoke and said that if there were required time beyond that initial meeting, they would seek private donations. Rebecca is a partner of community workshop. Her firm is known as Community Workshop, LLC. Rachel explained that they first heard about her in October, thanks to the Herald. Discussion ensued and continued with the group. Doon noted he was interested in any efforts that are going to bring more efforts and resources to improve the town. Pat noted that she thought it was worthy of following. She noted that she hoped it would gain some legs under it and continues on. She cautioned on the side of some organizations popping up and losing steam. She encouraged to keep the steam risen and so she would endorse it at this point. Doon made a motion to officially endorse Envision Rochester and their attempts to keep things vitalized and work with Vermont Council of Community Development. Pat seconded, so voted.

Jeff spoke about the issues of the noise in the village. Jeff read a letter from Susan Banas explaining her experiences of the noises coming from the Huntington House. Jeff announced that he and Janice and Susan and Erna had sent a letter to the board. He noted that the noise was as bad as its ever been, long after dark. He noted that the State Police were called, and the State Police made a call to the Huntington House. Jeff noted that guests outside went in. Doon noted that this call was made at 9:00-9:30 pm. Doon noted that the Huntington House had agreed to limit things down to 10pm outside. He noted there is no noise ordinance in town. Doon noted that statement in the letter noting that the application was issued covertly was a little bit misleading. He noted that it was a public meeting and the public is invited. He noted that those permits happen yearly, and they were warned on an agenda shows that the signing of the documents was not done in such a way that was like sneaking around. Doon noted that he understands that it is an issue and there is communication about the issue. He noted in terms of a change of use, he had brought the issue to the Planning Board and presented to them and they all agreed it was not a change of use that was properly warned is not a valid complaint. He noted that is the use of that property and has been for decades. Doon noted where do we go from here. Jeffrey spoke and said that the use of the property was not an issue before because clearly both the clientele and the owners were very different. Jeffrey spoke about how the clause was changed on their liquor license but was never discussed. The clause on the upper right-hand corner of their license hasn't been there before and hadn't been discussed. Doon stated moving forward that the best way to deal with this is that when the liquor license comes around for renewal in the spring is that all of the history will be stated what is on the license and what is now has been verbal agreements with the Huntington House in terms of toning down the time. Rachel spoke about how bright the lights are late at night and that she thought there might be an issue with the neighbors. She noted that it would be nice if there was some awareness to the neighbors. Rachel noted it would make sense to have a respectful conversation with the business owners and how they support the community with the various events around town. Marvin spoke up and stated that symmetric formula is 70 decibels at the property line is allowable. He noted that is not considered a noise nuisance anything over it is. Pat noted that she spent the weekend and up until the meeting polling, surveying and speaking with other neighbors in the area. she noted that she wanted to know if the neighboring residents had an opinion for or against to get an idea of how it is supported. She noted that the surrounding neighbors are in support of keeping the business going. They don't seem to express a large amount of noise coming their way. They find it to be something they can

tolerate. Doon expressed that it didn't diminish what Jeffery said and that he noted he disagreed with the time for respectful conversation is done. He noted that its going to require work from both sides. Doon noted he called the liquor agency and the premises were inspected. He found no violations and will continue to do so. Anni spoke from a business background and the growing pains for a business owner in their first year. She noted to give them the time and the space to do what they are doing this first year and then come back and respectfully talk about what is not working. Jeffrey stated that he wants the selectboard to take the paragraph off the liquor license immediately, so I am no longer affected by this. Doon noted its not a change in what they were doing it was an expansion. They decided to utilize their yard. A resident stood and spoke and stated that along the themes of community growth, growth and change is going to happen. He noted to take things to the legal action to the costs of the town is pretty extreme. He noted that we have a short summer season here and people want to enjoy it. Discussion ensued. Doon noted they would continue to moderate this issue.

Frank spoke and stated how the infrastructure of lower Maple Hill has become more resilient. He wanted to hear what Cooter had to say about the good work they are done. Cooter spoke about the ditching and culverts that they put in. Frank thanked them for responding to some of his concerns. He noted that the road crew did a really good job with the swale. He thanked them for all that they have done. Frank asked what all was happening on Route 100 and if it were all state work. He wondered if the state works with the town when they are work in the town. Doon noted that they did not have to.

Joan's Updates: Site 1 Bethel Mountain Rd. is on schedule for the most part. Completion is still looking pretty good by Oct. 11. She noted that the slope work which includes 20 culverts, being added along with concrete headwalls poured in place, footings and the outfall will be finished by next week. After 6 pm you can see the work when the construction work is not going on. She noted that next week is when they will do the road surface work and ditching. Reclaiming will start the week of Sept. 26. She noted on to Site 1B, which is the added site, DuBois and King is working on plans and costs. GW Tatro did give his estimate for the project and comes in at \$280,000.00. He expects it will take about 3 weeks. She noted that he was not clear if they would complete that section by Oct. 11. Joan continued on with Bethel Mountain Site 2 and noted that as said before it will be going through a VTrans IDIQ process, there will be a pre-bid meeting on Wednesday for interested contractors. She noted it was a limited bid process that has to comply with the town's procurement policy. She noted that our policy is actually silent on this process. She noted that VTrans sends it out to 20-50 pre-approved contractors. Joan proposed to write up a resolution to show how it does comply with the town's procurement policy and the reasons for undertaking it with VTrans the way we are doing it an can be signed by the selectboard to put in the files.

Library Updates: Tony noted that Jeanette has put up a long list of programs on the bulletin board for September and October. Tony noted that the last stained-glass window has been installed in the library and it is spectacular. Tony noted that Midge Scanlan created the stain glass window.

Marvin spoke about Masons comment at the last meeting to the selectboard about the Forest Service lack of community input. Marvin noted that he is glad and that he loves trees. He noted that he is not a tree hugger. He noted that they are a crop much like an oat crop or a hay crop and they need to be harvested and put to good. He noted they prevent fires and give wildlife more access. He stated that he is coming from a natural resource and he noted how Mason earlier stated that the sewage is going into the White River. He said it is not. He noted that the treatment plant is underground and does not go into

the river. Mason spoke up and said he did not say that earlier. Marvin continued on to say that the River has been declassified in 1980 stating that no treatment plant can dump into the river north of the confluence of the Tweed River and the White River. He noted that the classification forbade that. He noted that is a good thing. Wild life is the river and the woods. He noted that he certainly likes all of the wildlife. He noted he can look too far into the future, but he can look back to where the forest service did not do any logging until 1948 in this area. There was an office in 1968 in the place where the Hardware is. They had already got acquainted with Rochester because of the fire in the church New Years Eve of 1944. The forest service gave the timber in 1948 to the Eaton Lumber Company to rebuild the church. That was what they did for the community. They didn't have to have any community input back then. Marvin noted that it has only been 30 years that they have had to have an impact study. It has cost the Forest Service more to have a timber sale with these impact studies then what they got for the timber. They were harvesting it and selling it however not making any money. Marvin noted it needs to be harvested and controlled just like the wildlife. The deer need more room to roam. He noted that more and more landowners are posting their land against hunting. He noted that it is a handicap for our fish and game officials. He felt that we don't know enough to tell the forest service, no you can't cut that tree. We have to rely on their expertise.

Doon noted that a couple bids for the two jobs for Cyaara Drive and North Hollow at North View Dr. were received. One from Xcav8 and the other from ECS Excavating. He noted that because Tom was not present and Pat has to recuse herself, a decision would be made at a later special meeting.

Walt made a comment for those that don't know, the Park House Board is not trying to put a generator over there. A group of citizens that got together to try to do this project. That group of citizens wants to Thank the Harvest Fair attendees and venders who generously gave the other day and let them know we will be around for other functions.

Discussion continued about the missing book. Nothing more to report on that.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith