

April 12, 2021

Selectboard Meeting

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Pat Harvey, Frank Severy

Guests: Joan Allen, Kristen and Troy LaPell, Terry Severy, Martha Slater, Nancy Woolley, Susan Banas, Jess Barakat, Vic Ribauda, Keven and Paula Dougherty, Jeff Gephart, Kirk White, Gordon Merrill, Lolly Lindsey, Sarah Peery (GMP), Orca Media, Josh Casonguay (GMP), Kathryn Schenkman, Bruce Flewelling, Deb Moore, Burma Cassidy, Chris Williamson, Jeannette Bair, Ray and Cheryl Harvey

Doon called the meeting at 6:00 pm

Doon read the State statute guidelines for holding a proper meeting electronically and confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Additions to the Agenda: Martha-Fourth of July Parade; Kirk White-legislative updates; Vic & Sue Ribauda-donate picnic tables to the park; Jeff Gephart-VCRD Climate Economy Model Communities Program Information.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Doon noted a correction in Joan's Updates needing to be edited to "cleaning the storm drains" Doon moved to approve with the correction. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

Green Mountain Power Resiliency Zones: Josh Castonguay and Sarah Peery spoke about the Resiliency zones work. Josh noted a year ago GMP filed a climate plan that was focused on doing upgrades to the electrical systems to improve resiliency and reliability as we get more impacts from climate change. Josh noted part of this plan was to work with Towns, especially towns that are more rural and difficult to serve and look at those towns and see if there is a targeted approach to resiliency that might even involve battery storage or solar creating micro grids for individual facilities. Josh noted they are looking for towns to partner with and pilot the idea basically of creating resiliency beyond just the traditional poles and wires that have been done in the past. Sarah Peery spoke about the background of the overall program. She noted the resiliency zone is something that is new, hoping to develop with small towns in helping to create a resiliency to stay connected even when the lights go out. She noted it could include some combination of batteries, solar and communication infrastructure to be planned custom in partnership with the communities they partnership with. Sarah spoke on microgrid capability, which means when the rest of the grid goes down this micro grid can function on its own. She noted they are reaching out to the Town of Rochester because they have done an analysis of several Vermont communities looking at data and reliability, communications and infrastructure and we have been defined as a really good target candidate that could benefit from this plan. She noted the next step is to work with three communities each year in the pilot phase, this being the first year. She noted this will be a lengthy process. She noted on the GMP side they are here to offer help with planning, expertise and leveraging funding. She noted they also want to get to know our community. She opened to thoughts and questions and comments. Doon asked Jeff what his thoughts are. Jeff noted it is very interesting and wonderful. Jeff noted it will need some matching contributions from our community and that maybe a hurdle from a tax standpoint. Jeff

noted it does move us in the direction with the Town Plan with renewable energy sources. Doon asked if this happens in phases or how the plan happens over time. Josh noted the next step is to search and gather a little bit more information. Josh noted it would take identifying towns and then are the towns interested in exploring this with them. Josh noted there are a set of questions to complete. Josh noted this is about gathering data. Doon asked about matching funding from municipalities or individuals or both. Josh noted it depends on if a match is needed. He noted with the solar and storage is depending on the size it can pay for itself. Discussion ensued. Doon noted as a board that working with GMP on this plan is beneficial for our town.

VCRD Climate Economy Model Communities Program Information- Jeff noted the goals to this program it to help communities model rapid change by implementing energy efficiency transportation system transformation and mobile energy generation working lands development and entrepreneurship and business incubation to spur economic resilience and progress. He noted his nervousness with the focus and crisis with the high school. He noted the disjointedness between that, our buildings and our community as a whole. He noted currently our need with what to do with the high school has really gotten us in a very narrow focus. He noted the model communities providing expert assistance in review community needs. He noted the difficulty with all the shifting of what is the best thing for us energy wise and climate wise is all up in the air. He noted we need to look at things holistically and hoped this program would enable that. He noted he is drafting a letter for support from the selectboard to see if we can get that one town seat in the program. He noted the deadline is at the end of the month. He noted it would really broaden our view to see if we could come up with solutions across the board. Doon noted it sounded great. Jeff noted he would draft a letter for the board. Katheryn noted her support for the holistic approach and thanked Jeff and the Board. Jeff meant no criticism in any way; he noted the great efforts put forth and just need to broaden the view to get it right. Katheryn noted the Planning grant was going to be submitted with lots of endorsement letters from Green Mountain Economic Development, Two Rivers, the planning commission, many organizations, and individuals. She noted the importance if awarded, the planning grant is an opportunity to work with our consultants to look at a lot of things and look beyond.

Legislative Updates: Kirk White noted his plan to visit every month to update the board with new work in place. Kirk noted he has had the great fortune to be on the Commerce and Economic Committee. He noted his committee is the one that reviews the programs and funds mentioned today. He noted to take advantage of those resources. He noted the Legislature mostly has been working on COVID relief for communities. He noted originally bringing the funds out of the general fund. He noted the Feds have thrown a bunch of money at us trying to figure out how to allocate that. The Recovery bill that the house passed last week, which the senate is working on had 97.5 million dollars in Federal stimulus funds that we are channeling to businesses, schools, housing, work force development, broadband and many other categories. Kirk noted with the ARPA funds (America Rescue Plan Act) each municipality in the state will get a certain amount of funds equal to \$293/per person based on 2010 census. He noted his best calculations indicate Rochester should get about \$322,000.00 in funding. He noted the federal rules are still fluid. He noted each municipal town should receive 50% by June 11. He noted the other 50% will be available a year later and each town will have to spend it in 3 ½ years. He noted to work with different committees to help with the process' on how to spend it best in your

town. He noted these town specific funds, not to spend on transportation or broadband because other funds may become available to fund those areas. He noted Vermont Cities and Towns received a large amount of money as well as the Regional Development Corporations to fund staff for them to help towns navigate how to best utilize the funding available to each municipality. He noted this is the time to do the projects that have been neglected and had lack of funds. He noted there will be 270 million going to school districts as well.

Fourth of July Parade: Martha noted she needed information on how to plan for the Fourth of July Parade plans. She has been closely monitoring the COVID State guidelines and noted the governor has made statements about large gatherings but to continue to wear masks and social distancing. Martha noted she spoke with Pat and Terry Severy about changing the route of the Parade to travel around the Park so people could spread out all along the outside of each side of the Park instead of just along Main Street. Kirk asked what the turn out is for the Parade. Martha thought someone estimated about 750-800 people attended. Kirk noted the current plan that the governor is shoot for, which is always subject to change is currently set for June to include in outdoor gatherings and events, an allowance of 900 people plus an unlimited number of vaccinated people. Kirk noted this still means distancing and masks are required. Martha was not certain if there would be anyone to do the BBQ. Bruce Flewelling noted Pierce Hall would be putting on the BBQ and to contact Becky Donnet. Martha asked for support and help in setting up the festivities for the Parade.

Donate picnic tables to the park: Vic and Sue Ribaldo asked the board if they could donate a picnic table for the Park. Doon noted to hold off before putting it on the park because the Park was getting fertilized. Sue noted it had to be ordered so that would be ok. Doon thanked them for their generous donation.

Joan Updates: Joan noted Dubois and King do an annual inspection of our wastewater system. She noted they give us a new contract every year and we have received the new contract in the amount of \$3,000.00. She noted she needed to review if there is a change from last years contract. She noted it will need to be signed so they can work on that.

She noted the Bethel Mountain Road payment from VTrans still owes one more payment. She noted the final payment is in process. She noted it goes through a vetting system and its in the works. She thought it was in the vicinity of \$170,000.00. She noted she will confirm when its received.

Joan noted the paving on Route100 by VTrans has made some progress regards to our discussions with them on needing some of those stormwater and infrastructure under Route 100 and they talked to her about obtaining an email that could be signed by Doon. She noted VTrans is prepared now to replace several storm drains and drainage structures under the road that need to be replaced. She noted initially they didn't want to replace. She noted there will be disruption in the village, where there will be days that some of the business' will not be accessible by pedestrians or parking. She noted that VTrans will need the boards approval that there will not be any disruption and coordination with business owners about the plan. Doon asked Joan if she could write up a letter for the board, that would be great.

Joan noted she has been working with Cooter about putting out to bid the remaining roadwork for the FEMA 2019 storm. She noted there are five roads that will need ditching and stone lining the ditches. She noted one cross drain on Mount Cushman Road. She noted they had to scramble because questions were raised by FEMA environmental reviewers about whether we should have gotten permits either from D.E.C and/or from Army Corps of Engineers for work we have done in 2019 and 2020. She noted in the past it was never required, but FEMA reviewers are looking at it and asking the questions that we should have. She noted she is working with FEMA and reached out to Chris Bump for advice to get the accurate information at the State level and Army Corps if we did have to have permits and going forward if we will need to issue permits. Joan noted Cooter has been in touch with the state to see if any of the upcoming work would require permits from the D.E.C and they followed up that we did not. Joan will follow up and get it in writing. She noted the 5 bid-jobs, and the retaining wall will hopefully go out to bid to be completed by the end of the year.

Library Updates: Tony noted that they are still doing the Porch pick up. He noted they will have a Trustees meeting on Tuesday at 5:45 pm.

First Class Hotel License, Third Class Hotel License, Outside Consumption and Caterer's License approval: Frank asked what the time is for the Outside Consumption License is noted for. Doon noted it was set for 10 pm. Doon moved to approve the licenses for the Huntington House Liquor Licenses. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

Old Firehouse Building: Doon asked what that was about. He noted he had heard that someone was interested in assembling products. Doon noted the board was not interested in lending the building out for other purposes. He noted currently it is used to house things seasonally.

Rochester Public Library Approval for Park Use Applications: Tony noted they are asking to use the Bandstand during the Farmers market for a story telling event. He noted they would also like to set up a Children's book meeting program using pages from stories around the park using stakes in the ground showing pages from stories for kids to read around the park. He noted children would travel from stake to stake reading pages from a story. He noted the stories would change from time to time, but the stakes would remain in the ground. A question came up about the mowing. Tony noted they considered that and will do what they can so that it does not interfere. Doon noted with the use of the Bandstand it would be more preferred. Frank felt that it would be a nuisance with mowing and wondered if it would be best down along the ballfield along the river. He noted it would give parking and access and out of the way. Frank noted if it was going to be put up weekly and taken down every day that was one thing, Doon asked about doing it alongside with the Farmer's Market. Doon moved to approve the application for the use of the Bandstand during the Farmer's Market and to rethink the idea of using the park with the stakes. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted. r asked that the second application request for the stakes in the ground have further research and declined that application.

Concerns with Commercial through traffic on Bethel Mountain Road: Frank noted they are trying to stop the through traffic of Commercial vehicles on Bethel Mountain that is sent by GPS. Frank is working with Therese from Town of Bethel in working together on the issue. They are working through AOT. They would like to work on signage for both Towns. Frank noted a request for signage with Route 100 and 89, using Route 100 to Route 107. He noted the

same on Route 12 coming out of Woodstock, keep the traffic to use the main stay roads and not Bethel Mountain Road. He noted the signs are small and its too late once they are coming over. Frank noted it wont completely cure it, but the efforts will be helpful. Kathryn noted the concern of the brakes catching fire once they get to the bottom of Bethel Mountain coming into the village. She noted the drives are unbeknownst to the conditions of the road challenges because they are directed by their GPS. Kathryn noted the traffic came to a halt when the big signs were up during the repairs. She noted once the access to drive over from Bethel the large trucks are now traveling by GPS. She noted without having a runaway truck ramp and not a place to put one there is great concern. Kathryn noted those who live there witness this situation. She noted a letter written by Nancy Needham described a horrible experience she had being wedged and run off the road taking her mother over the mountain. Kathryn noted this is a serious situation for both towns. Frank noted there is communication between the two towns and that it will take some time. He noted it is a federally funded highway, so the State is also involved. Deb Moore asked about a large sign added for further awareness. Frank noted the addition of signage to alert trucks before entering the road would benefit, rather than trucks noting signage after entering onto Bethel Mountain without a turnaround location and feeling committed to continue. A long discussion ensued. The board will review the speed ordinances and the signage on the Bethel Mountain road and continue to work closely with the different agencies for a better solution in the right direction in addressing the problem.

Approval for Driveway Permit: Doon noted a permit for a driveway to be installed on the corner of Oak Lodge and Fiske road. Doon noted he would like to discuss this with John to address the location and will review.

Doon moved to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith