



MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting November 11, 2016

Present: Amy Todisco, Peter MacLaren, June Anderson, Lori Klein, Brad Long, Jack Sharry. Also ED Jasmine Bigelow.

Absent: Ted Fisher, Jim Tabor, Roger Nishi, Rosemarie White

The meeting was called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:10 a.m.

A quorum of 6 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair.

Opening Discussion:

1. Suggested that all Board members should try to attend the MRV Leadership Meeting to be held on November 16th at 6PM at the Waitsfield Elementary School.
2. An update on the Community Vitality Project (CVP) will be presented there. Board members Jack, Amy and Lori are involved in that committee. Jack reported that it is a group of great people, with great ideas. However there is still a fair amount of “storming” as they work towards a focus. VT Future is providing support and they are being asked to update an economic study to provide background for specifics of next steps.

Minutes of prior meetings:

1. Moved by Lori that the minutes of the October 14th Board meeting be accepted as circulated, seconded by June. Carried. The minutes are posted on our website.

Action Item updates:

1. Stowe Auto Show. Jasmine still to follow up to address the current possibilities. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Facebook Page. Being addressed as part of the Marketing plan. **Closed.**
3. Possible alternative location for the Chamber office & Visitor Center. Being addressed in ED report. **Closed.**
4. Visitor Center operation. Being addressed in ED report. **Closed.**
5. Finalize page in 4 Seasons’ Guide. Is being done currently. **Closed**

ED Comments:

1. Staffing: work in progress on job description for what was initially an Office Manager. Jasmine now recommends a broader role that will also assist with marketing and membership. She is aware of several potential candidates. Interim office manager Diana has been very helpful in the meantime. Also noted that the Chamber has been approached by Joan Gilbert, who has a grant to assist a non-profit for up to 18 months. Jasmine will meet with her shortly to see if there is a possible match. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Visitor Center: Volunteers are already helping, and Jasmine is meeting with Kathleen Cosentino shortly to discuss the plans for the ongoing volunteer support.
3. Office: Lots of cleaning up has been done and next step is some painting after checking details with the town. Vestibule still needs work—the plan is to exemplify the Mad River Valley. Details being thought through.
4. Building situation: Jasmine has met with the other tenants, being the MRVPD, the Vermont Land Trust, the Friends of the Mad River, the Mad River Path and the Historical Society. Jasmine thinks that the grouping and energy in the building provide a good framework for working together for better future use of the facility and cooperation on the various logistics aspects of using the building. Jasmine

recommends we stay as is, and she will continue to work to ensure a clear and fair process among the tenants and the town (the landlord) is put in place. Noted in passing that Jack Garvin advised that he has a space associated with the Warren Store that has become available. Jasmine has followed up to say we have no use for it at the present.

5. Membership: The current lack of an accurate reference database of members has been a challenge however Jasmine is close to sorting this out using FreshBooks as the base. We currently have approximately 160 members. Jasmine is planning to follow up with members who have not yet paid current dues to ensure we have a clear view of their status. Should all be finalized shortly. Jasmine has also noted that there are many opportunities for new members, including many who work at home or are telecommuters. Jasmine has discovered stats that show that twice as many people work from home in the MRV as compared to the average in Vermont.
6. WebCam at the Warren Store/Pitcher Inn: First of all Peter clarified that this camera is the property of the Chamber, while the Warren Store generously made a donation to the Chamber to cover 50% of the purchase price from Vickery Hill. The recent technical issues, which appear to have related to WiFi bandwidth at The Pitcher Inn, seem currently resolved. As there is an apparent possibility for a change of ownership at The Pitcher Inn in the near future, Jasmine and Roger will follow up at the appropriate time to discuss the best location and use of this camera for the future, as it is important asset for our website.
Action: Jasmine & Roger.
7. Kiosks: These continue to be problematic leading to some of the locations requesting to return them, but they need to be working all the time as they are a major asset for outreach to Valley visitors. There also seems to be a mix up about the status of ownership of the kiosk at The Bridges. Jasmine and Roger will meet to discuss and develop a plan for reliable operation and support. **Action: Jasmine & Roger**
8. Festival of Lights: Final details are being discussed with Sugarbush and a meeting with Candice White is planned. Note that we need a good PR story on our Stars in the Valley ASAP. **Action: June will follow up.**
9. Mad Bus: Jasmine has been discussing with MRVPD, in particular the recommendations from the Transportation Committee to have frequent rider cards, advertising by shops and restaurants, all in an effort to increase ridership, particularly among locals, and also raise additional revenue. Noted that the Valley Floor route is at risk.
10. Banners on the Slow Road: Need a protocol for hanging banners, which Jasmine is developing, and also a proposed charge of \$30 per week for non-Chamber members. **Action Jasmine.**
11. Overall governance: Jasmine plans to get to a point where, while we will have specific point people on the Board she can contact to discuss key items, the main role of the Board will return to be more of an advisory capacity on strategy and direction. She plans to prepare a “Board Orientation FAQ”, that will be particularly helpful for new Board members, to address roles and expectations for Directors and clarify the role of the ED.
12. Committees: Jasmine recommends that we re-characterize these as “Workgroups” and to form them, as required, by invitation to both Directors and other Chamber members. She has already discussed this approach with Jack and Jim for Marketing. Plans to do the same for Membership and Advocacy.
13. Monthly Workshops: Working on setting up monthly workshops led by local experts to help all businesses in the Valley. (Fee for non-members.)
14. Coffee Hour: Went really well with a dozen or so members showing up, and expressing interest in doing this ongoing, as is planned on a monthly basis.

Financial Report:

1. Meeting is set for next week among Rosemarie, Jasmine and Michele to discuss the books. Report next month.

New Business:

1. The Bridges: Jasmine has met with Kate Dempsey, the new GM at The Bridges. While their plans for continued Chamber membership had not been clear previously, they have now decided to re-join however the membership dues were not put in their budget. They have asked for a one-year reduced rate. Discussion ensued on how to address this request. Moved by Peter that the ED be authorized to negotiate a one-time deal, not to be considered a precedent, to make up the balance in trade, such as comp'd

memberships and/or day passes for Chamber members to use or provide to guests. Seconded by June, Carried. **Action: Jasmine.**

2. Top Gas/Travel I in Warren: The Warren Select Board is concerned about ongoing grounds maintenance, which is currently their responsibility, as the town owns the property. Not really clear what the issues are. Jack will discuss with Select Board Chair Andy Cunningham. **Action: Jack.**
3. Website: Brad has looked at the current website content, navigation, linking, etc. and has many ideas for improvements, now that we have full control of the site. Noted that our Webmaster Jackson is ready to get engaged in this discussion. Brad, Amy and Jasmine will have a follow up discussion to develop a plan, which Jasmine will organize. **Action: Jasmine.**

Adjournment:

1. Moved by Lori, seconded by Amy. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Next Meetings:

1. The next Board meeting will be on Friday December 9th at 11 a.m. at the General Wait House.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

Action Item Summary:

1. Stowe Auto Show. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Staffing: **Action Jasmine**
3. WebCam: **Action Jasmine & Roger**
4. Kiosks: **Jasmine & Roger**
5. Stars Story: **Action June**
6. Banner Protocol: **Action: Jasmine**
7. The Bridges membership details: **Action Jasmine**
8. Top Gas issues: **Action Jack**
9. Website next steps: **Action: Jasmine (and others)**