



MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce Minutes of Board Meeting May 19th, 2017

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

Apologies: Rosemarie White, Roger Nishi.

The Board meeting was called to order by the Chair Amy Todisco at 11:07 a.m.

A quorum of 7 Directors present at the start of the meeting was declared by the Chair. Ted arrived shortly after the meeting started.

Minutes of April 14th meeting:

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

Action Item updates:

1. Continue dialog with LCRCC Chamber. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Kiosks. Remains open. **Action: Roger**
3. Banner Protocol. Remains open (not seen as urgent). **Open**
4. Top Gas area maintenance. Remains open (not seen as urgent). **Open**
5. Strategic Plan communications coordination. Being addressed later in meeting.
6. Member newsletters, Board bios. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
7. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. Remains open. **Action: Board Members**
8. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
9. Follow up with Central Vermont Chamber regarding their recruiting in the MRV. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine.**
10. Mail letter to suspended members. **Completed – closed.**
11. Meetings with MRG, Lisa Loomis & Rec District. **Completed – closed.**
12. Address various operations cost savings. **Completed – closed.**
13. MRV-ME replacement proposal. Being addressed later in meeting.
14. Take over Economic Dashboard starting in May. Being addressed later in meeting.
15. Brand Equity/Placemaking planning. Being addressed later in meeting.
16. Send copy of Killington Plan to Jasmine. **Completed – closed.**
17. Set up task Teams. Being addressed later in meeting.
18. Design for Art New England Ad. **Completed, and Magazine is published. Closed.**
19. Website Re-design. Being addressed later in meeting.
20. Valley Vitality Fund. Being addressed later in meeting.

Financial Update:

1. Karen Pearson and Michele Eid have now met. Karen has reported that the books are not in bad shape with just some clean up required. Financial Report should be ready in 2 weeks.
2. Noted that we had \$8k more of a surplus at fiscal YE 2016 than previously recorded.

3. Michele has paper archive files dating back to 2000 and is looking for guidance on disposition. All are also available electronically. Moved by Jack, seconded by Amy, that we direct Michele to shred them. Carried. **Action: Jasmine to advise Michele.**
4. A/R is now way down to about \$5k.

Membership Update:

1. No new members have joined in the last month, and no losses, however the ED reports that there seems a lot of renewed enthusiasm among members.
2. Keeping members up to date remains a challenge in some cases as some members just don't seem to read emails, and then express concern about being unaware of what's going on. Continued *personal* interaction and outreach by the ED AND the Board members remains very important. **Action: ALL**
3. The ED met with Matt Lillard, the new manager at MRG, and Eric Freidman. Eric had read our strategic plan, said it looked great, and provided some positive and constructive suggestions. Eric expressed his willingness to help in an informal capacity.
4. The ED and Amy met with Joshua and Kristine, the MRVPD staff. It was a good positive meeting. Peter reported that he is hearing very positive feedback from the MRVPD Steering Committee about the new direction and energy of the Chamber. A huge change from a year ago.

Director's Report:

1. **Valley Vitality Fund.** There seems to a positive feeling to the concept of a framework for voluntary additional contributions to support "Advancing the Valley". ED suggests we take next steps after we get the basics in place, e.g. the tiered membership dues. To be reviewed in 6 to 12 months time. **Action: Deferred**
2. **Potential new name** for MRV Chamber of Commerce. ED noted that there is a general feeling among the Board and others that it is a good time to consider a name change. Needs to be carefully chosen, to embrace our role of business support, tourism marketing and vitality. It's important to recognize that our name is our "Brand". Jasmine will do some research on how other similar organizations are positioning themselves. **Action: Jasmine.** Board members are encouraged to send suggested starting point names to Jasmine to help with ideas. **Action: ALL.** The Board agreed we should start the process, whole noting it is important that we have the "right" name that will be widely embraced before we actually initiate a change. The ED advised that any change can be registered as a "DBA" (doing business as) so there will be minimal paperwork involved. Agreed that next steps are to arrange a meeting to engage a wider invited group to discuss face to face, with some specific proposals on the table to seed the dialog. **Action: Jasmine**
3. **MRV-ME Replacement.** The overall intent will be primarily to provide a realistic budget for marketing. Noted in particular that the intent will be that, in general, the Chamber will no longer directly provide supporting funds for events. As discussed previously, a tiered membership dues structure, with incremental benefits for members at each level, seems the best approach. We will need much clearer articulation of the benefits for members at each level. The starting dues level for each type of business would be kept very much in line with the current approach, at least for the coming year. Also we should consider a different term from "dues". Moved by Jack that the ED should move this idea forward into a detailed plan by working with the Membership Task Team. Seconded by Jim, Carried. **Action: Jasmine & Membership Task Team.**

Task Teams:

1. Priority teams are:
 - **Membership** – Amy, June, Lori & Jasmine
 - **Visitor info** – Roger & Peter
 - **Development** – Rosemarie & Brad
 - **Communications** – Jack
 - **Marketing Content** – Jim & Ted
 Jasmine will arrange the kick-off for each team. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Noted that there is an opportunity to invite others to join the teams, and we should think about candidates who might also be a potential good fit as future Board members.

Strategic Plan Communications:

1. A plan has been developed for a sequential roll out of communications.
2. The primary approach will be article in the Valley Reporter (VR) roughly every two weeks. FPF will be used as a teaser, not duplicating VR articles. Then content will be added to our website about a week later.
3. A possibility is to ask other Chamber members to submit articles for intervening weeks.
4. Plan will be implemented by Jasmine & the Communications Task Team. **Action: Communications Task Team**

Dashboard:

1. For expediency the immediate plan is to keep the same format.
2. There are some challenges with a more graphic approach as the VR then classes this as an advert, not news.
3. The ED has a meeting scheduled with Lisa Loomis on June 5th to explore a path forward. **Action: Jasmine**
4. In any event we should consider publishing a graphic version on our website. To be considered as part of website plans – discussed later in the meeting.

Branding & Signage:

1. MRVPD has agreed to contribute \$1k to the design process.
2. ED met with MRVPD ED Joshua and Drew Simmons and received good guidance.
3. We will be asking designer Sally Stetson to come up with proposals based on using the existing logo.
4. ED has started the process of dialog with other key Valley organizations, and the discussions are going well. She will also be talking with Sugarbush and MRG to discuss the best approach for linking the brands.

Website:

1. Reworking the website is a priority. Brad and Peter have agreed to work on next steps with the ED.
2. ED to arrange kick-off meeting. **Action: Jasmine, with Brad & Peter**

Office Space:

1. The prevailing view is that the current space is not ideal, neither for visitors nor staff.
2. Noted that our lease has not been renewed since 2011 so we are effectively on a month-to-month basis. Our rent is \$705 per month, including utilities.
3. The Town of Waitsfield, our landlord, while open to us making improvements, has made it clear that they will not pay for any changes nor improvements to the building.
4. There is some disagreement with the Historical Society over the use of and management of the “shared” space currently housing the Historical Society artifacts.
5. The ED and Executive Committee are current exploring options and will report back. **Action: Jasmine and Executive Committee**

Adjournment:

1. Moved by Lori, seconded by Amy. Carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

Next Meetings:

1. The next Board meeting will be held on Friday June 9th at 11 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Peter MacLaren, Secretary

Held over Action Items:

1. Continue dialog with LCRCC Chamber. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
2. Kiosks. Remains open. **Action: Roger**
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5. Member newsletters, Board bios. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**

6. Invite a friend to ED Coffee mornings. Remains open. **Action: Board Members**
7. Exchange ideas with Karen Nevin. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine**
8. Follow up with Central Vermont Chamber regarding their recruiting in the MRV. Remains open. **Action: Jasmine.**

New Action Items:

9. Advise Michele to shred legacy financial files. **Action: Jasmine**
10. Personal Interaction with members. **Action: ALL**
11. Valley Vitality Fund: **Deferred**
12. Research other organizations' approach to naming. **Action: Jasmine**
13. Email ED with name suggestions. **Action: All**
14. Arrange meeting of invited members to discuss naming. **Action: Jasmine**
15. Tiered membership plan. **Action: Membership Task Team**
16. Kick-off Task Teams. **Action: Jasmine**
17. Implement Strategic Plan Communications. **Action: Communications Task Team**
18. Format for Dashboard in VR. Meeting with Lisa Loomis. **Action: Jasmine**
19. Website redesign kick-off meeting. **Action: Jasmine, with Brad & Peter**
20. Office Space recommendations: **Action: Jasmine & Executive Committee**