



**Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce
Minutes of Annual Meeting
September 9, 2020
Held by Zoom video conferencing**

Present: A quorum of approximately 50 members of the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, guests and Executive Director Eric Friedman
Meeting Chair: Peter MacLaren

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:30PM

1. The Executive Director (ED), Eric Friedman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He commented on the challenges that the community and the Chamber have had in recent months with the COVID-19 crisis, that the Chamber was now focused on helping our members through the crisis, and that membership remains strong. He expressed his appreciation for the foundation that our prior ED Jasmine Bigelow and Membership Director Ginger Berkelhamer built. He also expressed how unfortunate it was that we couldn't keep our membership director due to projections of declining revenues.
2. The Chair thanked Eric for his significant contributions to the Chamber over the last 15 months since he came on Board as Executive Director. In particular for refocusing efforts starting in March to provide support to both our members and the overall business community in dealing with the business impact of the COVID-19 restrictions.
3. The Chair and the ED introduced retiring Sugarbush President Win Smith and thanked him for the major role he had played over the last 19 years supporting the community and the Chamber. Further, the ED announced that in recognition of Win Smith's contribution to the Valley, the Chamber has instituted a new annual award to be called the Win Smith Be Better Award. The award would not be a plaque, but something thoughtful and tailored to the recipient. The ED then announced that the first recipient was the outgoing Board Chair Peter MacLaren for his contribution to the Chamber and to the Valley over many years. He presented Peter with two face masks in the MacLaren tartan.
4. Win Smith thanked the Chamber as over the last few years it has provided excellent support to the community and to Sugarbush, and he expressed his appreciation to the Chair and the ED for their leadership. Win noted that with Sugarbush now part of Alterra the leadership and support of the overall organization had been extremely

valuable in dealing with the current COVID-19 crisis and planning for the coming ski season. Win then introduced John Hammond as the new President of Sugarbush. John has been an employee at Sugarbush for longer than Win has been President and will bring considerable experience and expertise to his new role. John made a few comments of introduction.

5. The Chair introduced Rusty Gregory of Alterra Mountain Company. Rusty talked about the challenges the skiing industry overall and the Alterra properties, including Sugarbush, have to face in planning for opening for the coming season. The US Ski Association has developed overall guidelines for safe operation during the COVID-19 crisis and Alterra's will be following that approach. Rusty congratulated John in his new role as Sugarbush President. He emphasized that under the distributed governance model that Alterra uses, John is the senior spokesperson for the organization here in the Mad River Valley.
6. Matt Lillard and John Hammond then provide brief updates of plans for upcoming ski season at MRG and Sugarbush respectively. MRG will be as open as possible for skiing by shareholders and passholders however day tickets may have to be limited. Advanced ticket products such as the Mad Card will not be sold this year. Use of the refurbished indoor facilities will likely be severely limited. MRG would be open for Fall Foliage on 9/26. Detailed plans for Sugarbush operations will be announced around September 14th.
7. The Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting had been provided with the online meeting notice. Acceptance was moved by June Anderson, seconded by Kris Merchant, and carried unanimously.
8. The ED provided an overview of the Budget approved by the Board for the coming year.
 - a. The budget was distributed on the website with the meeting notice.
 - b. It has been set to be conservative recognizing that some members may not be able to continue, while at the same time anticipating new members, who have in fact been joining recently.
 - c. The Chair noted that if we do succeed in having upside to revenues, the focus will continue to be improving the Destination Marketing part of the website that the ED has already made considerable progress with.
9. Election of Board of Directors and Officers
 - a. The Chair expressed his thanks to Board members Lori Klein, Jim Tabor and himself who are leaving the Board after terming out following two successive 3-year terms. The Chair also thanked Kris Merchant for his contribution to the Board over the last year and his thanks to Kris for graciously agreeing to leave his

term early to open the door for the nomination of Roger Nishi, to bring Roger's experience back to the Board in these challenging times.

b. The Board recommended slate of nominations was distributed on the website with the meeting notice. No further nominations were received.

c. Moved by the Chair, seconded by Brad Cook that:

The following slate of Directors be elected:

- TJ Greenwood – Lawson's Finest
- Sean Kramer – 1824 House
- Matt Lillard – Mad River Glen
- Mary Tuthill – Mad River Taste Place
- Roger Nishi – Waitsfield & Champlain Valley Telecom

The following slate of Officers be elected:

- Ana Dan: Chair
- Roger Nishi: Secretary
- Mimi Buttenheim: Treasurer

Carried unanimously.

d. Each of the incoming Directors gave a few words of introduction.

e. The Chair noted that as per the Bylaws, as outgoing Chair he would continue to support the Executive Committee in an ex-officio role.

f. The position of Vice Chair is being left vacant for now.

g. All other Directors will continue, specifically:

- Ana Dan – Hyde Away/Sage
- Mimi Buttenheim – Mad River Distillers
- Jack Sharry – Individual Member
- June Anderson – MRV 4 Season Guide
- Kevin Begin – Tucker Hill Inn
- Diane Forester – Sugarbush
- Suze Edwards – Sugar Fish VT

10. Incoming Chair Ana Dan expressed her thanks to the outgoing Chair and presented a gift of a Cheese Cutting Board and Mad River Taste Gift Card on behalf of the Board. She noted that it was an honor to be elected Chair of the Board and she looks forward to leading the work of the Chamber over the coming years.

11. Chamber Update. The ED noted that the Strategic Plan had been reviewed and still provides a clear basis for the work of the Chamber.

He reiterated the Chamber's Strategic Plan and its 3 Platforms;

- Brand Equity
- Destination Marketing
- Unity

At the same time the coming year will be challenging. He will continue efforts to support our members during the crisis. Marketing efforts will be focused on the

website, ideas for improving the effectiveness of the Visitor Center, and collaboration with the Stowe Area Association and Revitalize Waterbury on marketing programs. Also mentioned as a special project was a trail head and swim hole beautification project. Special thanks were acknowledged to the regular chamber volunteers, Charlie, Sandy and Marie. In response to a question the ED concurred that continuing the successful work with social media would be part of the marketing plan.

12. The Chair, Peter, thanked everyone for coming and expressed thanks to the businesses that had offered discounted food and beverages for sale to members to enjoy during the Zoom meeting.

13. A motion to Adjourn was moved by Lori Klein, seconded by Brad Cook, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:45PM.

Minutes taken by Peter MacLaren & Roger Nishi