



Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
July 28th, 2020

In attendance:

Board Members: Ana Dan, Peter MacLaren, Suze Edwards, Lori Klein, June Anderson, Kris Merchant, Mimi Bittenheim, Kevin Begin, Jack Sharry. (Jack had to leave the meeting at 11:00AM)

Chamber Staff: Eric Friedman

Apologies: Jim Tabor, Diane Forester

Held using Zoom video conferencing.

Meeting Opened at 10:10 AM

### **Minutes**

- Approval of the minutes of the July 14<sup>th</sup> Board meeting was moved by June, seconded by Kris and carried.

### **Strategic Plan Update and Work Priorities for coming year**

- Following discussion all agreed that the Strategic Plan still is a solid basis for our ongoing work. The key is to set our priorities for the coming year.
- Website needs updating for content and navigation as addressed at our last meeting.
- Visitor Center remains a key asset even if currently closed. Need to continue with plans to implement a collaborative space with other Valley non-profits for synergy, shared costs and leveraging volunteers.
- While we remain closed it's a good idea to have pre-packaged information available at entrance to Visitor Center, re-stocked by volunteers as necessary. June can help with preparation.
- We need to see if the Town of Waitsfield will open and service the public washrooms in the Wait House.
- Marketing needs to focus increasingly on Social Media, possible marketing collaboration with neighboring communities and cooperative marketing with interested members, given zero budget and limited bandwidth. Possible grants should be pursued.
- Noting that a number of people are moving into the Valley, various "welcome approaches are worth considering. E.g. a "Welcome to the Valley" package distributed in collaboration with the Relators.
- Another way of introducing businesses in the Valley to both new and longtime residents is cross sector promotions, e.g. between restaurants and retail.
- A content theme for marketing the Valley to both residents and visitors is "neighborhoods", as it is clear that many people don't know about all the "hoods" around the Valley.

- A critical and urgent need is an approach for clean up at trailheads and swimming holes. This has always been a problem but seems particularly bad this year. Taking a leadership role in collaboration with Rotary, Friends of the Mad River and the Mad River Path and others on a “Pack it in, Pack it out” campaign should be pursued. Also, to see if we can get the towns to empty the few existing trash barrels more frequently. Also, maybe these organizations would help us organize a Valley “Green-up Day”.
- Potentially we can take leadership on a broader basis with those organizations and others in an ongoing a “Make the Valley Better” type campaign. There seems to be potential to engage some newcomers in an effort like this.
- As suggested by Kevin, Eric will lay out workplan deliverables and timeline in spreadsheet format so that he and the Board can track progress.
- Eric will prepare a one-page bullet type summary of the workplan for distribution with the annual meeting package.

### **Budget Review**

- A review of accounts receivable for investments from members shows that we expect to collect all but about \$3k of the outstanding amount. A few members have dropped out, mainly because their business have closed or no longer have business interests in the Valley.
- Eric will make every effort to have all the collectable receivables in the bank by the end of the fiscal year on August 31<sup>st</sup>. He will reach out to Board members for help as necessary.
- The 2020-21 budget income is based on the year end forecast less 10% to be conservative. However, every effort will be made to meet or beat the current year. Our ability to invest in marketing is dependent on more income.
- A particular focus will be on bringing in new members in sectors that have typically been underrepresented, like construction.
- On the expense side all line items are at the bare minimum to continue to deliver services to our members. Eric emphasized the importance of continuing to deliver on the expectations we have set for member at all levels of investment.
- The overall strategy will to aim for a stable year and set things in place for growing marketing programs in 2021-22 when hopefully business will be back closer to normal.
- For financial management Eric, Mimi and our bookkeeper Karen are continuing to clean up processes to simplify tracking and improve ongoing reporting.

### **Board Nominations**

- As noted at our prior meeting, at the end of the year in August Jim, Lori and Peter all term out after 6 years of service to the Board – thanks!
- The following have agreed to be nominated at the Annual Meeting as incoming Board members: Matt from Mad River Glen, Mary from the Taste Place and Sean from 1824 House. We are also anticipating adding to the slate one of the senior staff members from Lawson’s Finest Liquids – to be confirmed this week.
- The following existing Board members have agreed to stand at the Annual Meeting as officers: Ana as Chair, Mimi as Treasurer, Kevin as Secretary, and Peter as ex-officio member of the Executive Committee. The position of Vice Chair will be left

vacant until later in the coming year.

- The slate of nominations was moved by Peter, seconded by Lori and carried.

### **Annual Meeting**

- As already agreed, the Annual Meeting be held as usual during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September, using Zoom.
- Eric is still trying to reach National Brotherhood of Skiers (past) President, Peggie Allen to be our keynote speaker along with Rusty & Win from Alterra. The final date of our meeting will be set when he has confirmed their availability.
- Eric is working on plans to make the Zoom meeting more fun by partnering with local restaurants and purveyors of drinks to have annual meeting take-out packages that members can buy to take home to enjoy during a social part of the Zoom meeting.
- The meeting package needs to be on the Chamber Members' side website by at least 30 days before the annual meeting along with an email to all members inviting them to the meeting, linking to that package. The objective is to complete this process by August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Motion to adjourn moved by Peter, seconded by Ana.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

We will meet again **on Tuesday August 11<sup>th</sup> at the earlier time of 9:30AM.**

Minutes taken by Peter MacLaren