

Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) All-Champions Meeting
Monday, 6/17/2013 - 5:30 pm
Minutes

Present: B. Shepeluk, M. Luce, D. Winham, L. Parette, R. Ellis, B. Farr, S. Flanders, S. Lotspeich, M. Rivera, M. Callan, E. Loomis

R. Ellis called the meeting to order at 5:43 and began with a big welcome back to Bill Shepeluk.

Hiatta has expanded Bridgeside Books. Now her bookstore is bigger than the library!

M. Luce made a motion to approve the minutes from 6/3/13. This motion was seconded by M. Callan and passed unanimously.

Darren Winham gave the group an update.

He has been working with two businesses that want to locate to Waterbury. One is expanding from 15 employees to 40 employees wants to be centrally located and the other wants to move into Waterbury and expand as well. Both want to lease. One wants to move to new property and Darren has been working with a builder. He has also been working with Lars and the rest of the Creative Economy team. A business will be moving into Ocha's old space, which will be open regular business hours. An additional \$18 million has been given to the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery program. Some people in Waterbury didn't get all the money they requested. Residential commercial property owners weren't allowed to apply for this money and people who took out loans were disallowed CDBG-DR funds too. Perhaps this can be reexamined.

Sunflower Salon and Boutique has moved into Vincent's. The Stowe Street Emporium has changed hands.

The Vermont Digital Economy project will be meeting tomorrow morning at Arvad's.

Regarding Wasson hall, Darren is working with investors and also talking about a higher-end senior living center for Weeks Hall. A business was considering the flea market site but turned it down. One business is looking to move to the site of the Stone Shed if it is demolished. Darren is also working on the State's economic development incentives using State workers as a pilot program.

Darren has been working with Steve Lotspeich and the Town plan almost finished. Part of this plan calls for an increase in parking in the downtown and Darren has been looking into options for parking. Paul Steiner (the owner of the building Bargain Boutique is in) could be one option, though Darren has not heard from him. Another is to subdivide 51 South Main Street for parking and advertise a Request for Proposals that allows for an easement. Darren also examined 28 Stowe Street (owned by Dwane Tillotson) next to Jing Ji's Egg Roll. The option here is to take down Jing Ji's and the blue building next to it. The footprint of the blue building could be used as retail space and the rest of the property could be used for parking. As was mentioned before, a new business is going into Ocha's space and will have a long-term lease agreement. The owner of this building has offered to provide parking behind Ocha for

all nights and all weekends for 30 cars for 10 years. The fee would be \$600 per month for all 30 spaces, which is \$20 per parking space (this is about half of what parking goes for in Burlington). The owner requests that Waterbury take care of plowing with the exception of his tenants' spots. He has also requested that the parking lot be repaved when the Main Street Reconstruction project occurs and would also like it policed.

Darren also reports that a business will be moving into the second and third floors of Steele's Block around the first of the year.

The Department of Housing and Community Development will be hosting a public hearing on Thursday, June 27, 2013 at 3:30pm at the Bugbee Senior Center (262 N. Main Street, White River Junction) to seek input on the unmet and remaining disaster recovery needs. Perhaps options for residential commercial property owners and homeowners who borrowed for flood mitigation measures on their homes could be discussed at this meeting. Planning and implementation portions of historic downtown projects are another topic of discussion.

Megan Rivera then provided the group with her update.

She has been training Fauna Hurley as the new Executive Director of Revitalizing Waterbury. Her first official day in the position is June 25th. Tripp and his team came to Waterbury for a meeting on June 6th and will be sending along a follow-up report to detail their next Waterbury trip, which is tentatively scheduled for the first week of August. Their work will focus on a Master Plan for Waterbury.

Laura Parette also gave an update as the co-chair of Revitalizing Waterbury's Economic Development Committee. She's been looking into how to connect with the anticipated influx of construction workers that will be working at the State Office Complex over the next two years and how to get them to use the services and businesses in our community. The Economic Development committee (and Barb Farr) plans to work with a consultant and construction manager at the State to find out more about the types of workers that will be in Waterbury (i.e.- how many workers will there be, will they be from in-State or out, what sort of incentivized programs might they be looking for, etc.). She wants to make sure this new group is welcomed to our community. Laura would also like to connect Waterbury with a "We Dig Barre"-type organization for the Main Street Reconstruction project. There's a group that would like to take a field trip to Barre to meet with the We Dig Barre folks to learn about their successes and challenges. At what point will we unify to set up a group to work with the Main Street reconstruction?

Darren advised that the We Dig Barre group formed was separately from the group of engineers group. The We Dig group was made up of merchants and they had gotten a \$30,000 grant. They met monthly and then biweekly and had a website, and even a mascot that attended meetings to give reports and went to functions. In terms of a road construction project, Barre is at an advantage because they have a parallel road (something Waterbury is lacking).

Steve Lotspeich mentioned that Barre was allotted \$100,000 in the budget for promotion (website, radio spots, organizational aspects, etc.). This is something we should be working towards now.

Darren feels that it is important for RW to talk to residents about the logistics of the construction (for instance, how late work can continue into the night, for example). This didn't really happen in Barre because workers didn't work around the clock since the work was being done in a more commercial and less residential area.

Skip Flanders stated that Act 250 didn't approve around-the-clock construction work at the State Office Complex.

Laura Parette would like us to direct people to her if we hear residents and businesses talking about forming a group to deal with this so we don't duplicate efforts.

It is worth noting that the VTrans budget allowed for a municipal public works director on their road projects. Winooski hired a temporary public works director to take care of the every-day PWD-type work during their construction project, which turned out to be worth about \$200-300,000.

Monica Callan suggested involving the ski areas into a collaborative effort with RW. They may be interested since the Main Street reconstruction work will affect them to some extent. Bill Shepeluk points out that we don't want them to tell skiers to get off at Exit 9 and 11, but not our exit.

In terms of champion updates, Dan Currier and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission were awarded two grants. One will be for one-foot contour LiDAR mapping and the other will be for a watershed basis study (which will be shared by Moretown, Waterbury, and Duxbury). Dan had originally applied for these projects as one application, but after it was denied, broke the project up into two components and two separate grants.

Roy Schiff of Milone and MacBroom is applying for about \$3.9 million of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds for the Choke Study project, which would be performed in phases. The overall goal of the Choke Study is to lower the flood waters in Waterbury by 1.5 feet. Involved supporters of this project include John Ostrum, Rob Evans, Skip, and John Grenier.

Regarding floodwaters, some of Darren's investors have been spooked by Waterbury Record articles against building in the floodplain. He would like documentation that this study is happening because it will make investing a less scary prospect for potential investors.

Hunger Mountain Children's Center has heard that the letter from HUD approving CDBG-DR funds for the HMCC project is on its way. HMCC will meet with Ann Kroll and Carl Bohlen at the Vermont Community Development Program in order to finalize the grant agreement. From there, they can finalize the purchase and sale agreement draft with BGS for the HMCC board to approve. HMCC's architect has been meeting with Center staff to review flood plans and designs and is getting specific information from each classroom teacher about each age group's space needs. HMCC's Historical Preservation review is complete, and no red flags were raised in the process.

HMGP still has about \$11 million or \$12 million in its pot. There's an additional \$18 million in CDBG-DR funds. Perhaps either could be eligible pockets of money that a local office could help filter down to help homeowners tap into flood mitigation money for elevating homes. Some do feel that there's not a big demand for this because people are exhausted after the flood, but yet many people went back into their homes without doing long-term mitigation. Perhaps having money available will be an incentive for homeowners to do this type of work. Maybe they would be interested if there was a turn-key general contractor that could do this work for them. Skip thinks it's very disruptive and people might not want to do this. Does anyone have other ideas for how to tap into HMGP funds or the next round of CDBG-DR funding?

Barb Farr has been considering HMGP funds for the Stanley and Wasson Halls site. HMGP funds would pay for the demolition of Stanley Hall as long as an easement was put on the Stanley site (which would allow for green space and parking). And HMGP funds would also pay to elevate Wasson Hall.

Tripp Muldrow and his team might cover specific zoning regulations for Waterbury Village to develop more intensely at an elevation and to be flood resilient. This would make for a dense downtown. So far, money hasn't allowed us to look outside the Village. Could we change zoning outside the Village and have development there?

With CDBG-DR funds, it would be realistic to look at being more flood-resilient and have a proactive stance if we do get flooded again. It took a long time for money to come in after Irene, and many people didn't wait, they just took out loans. SBA loans took far too much time. It would be beneficial to have procedures in place so next time we can get right in to recovery. Congressman Welch might be willing to write a letter specific to our project

Regarding the spreadsheet (which outlines where funding for the 22 LTRC projects might come from), please think on this and send any comments to Barb.

There will be a Preservation Trust of Vermont workshop on July 8 and 9 on 2 day workshop on libraries, churches, and public and nonprofit-owned buildings. Megan Rivera will be training Fauna Hurley during this time. The library is considering sending a representative. There is not much planning money remaining in the budget for this, so it might not be possible for Eva to attend this. However, Barb will get her registration info to Bill and to explain to him how the money in her budget could be used to send her to this workshop.

Eva's year-long term of VISTA service will be wrapping up at the end of August. The Town paid \$7,000 in 2012 to obtain a VISTA, and at the time that money was not in the budget. Eva would like to take September off, and come back for two and a half months, but this is not allowable by the VISTA organization, unless there was no break in service. Bill suggested an option of keeping Eva on, potentially as a town employee, and then hiring a second VISTA. Eva and Bill will discuss this this week.

Skip was wondering what to do if a project champion no longer supports the project they created, or outright opposes it. For instance, Karen Miller and Margaret Luce are champions of the Municipal Civic Building, but at the moment, Karen is not supporting the project. The community fair project was

initially presented at being at the library site, until the Stanley and Wasson Hall site became available. The group came to no conclusion on this topic.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eva Loomis, VISTA

Approved on: July 1, 2013

Upcoming Meetings & Dates:

- Municipal Civic Building informational meeting: 6/20/13 at 7pm, TBPS cafeteria
- Bond vote: 6/27/13, 7am-7pm, TBPS gymnasium
- Select Board meeting: 7pm, 7/1/13, Main St. Fire Station