



MAD RIVER VALLEY VERMONT

Minutes of MRVPD FLO Subcommittee November 7th, 2018

The first part of the meeting was a presentation of the current proposal to a joint meeting of the MRVPD Steering Committee and the MRV Chamber Board.

Present from the MRV Chamber Board:

Peter MacLaren, Lori Klein, Jack Sharry (by phone), June Anderson, Jim Tabor & Brad Long. (A quorum of 6 Directors.) Also, ED Jasmine Bigelow

Present from the MRVPD Steering Committee:

Bob Ackland, Jared Cadwell, Steve Shea, Don Simonini, Jim Westhelle, Peter MacLaren. (A quorum of at least one member from each town.) Also ED Joshua Schwartz and Community Planner Mariah Noth.

Present from the MRV FLO Subcommittee:

Bob Ackland, Jared Cadwell, Daryl Forrest, Don Simonini, Jasmine Bigelow, Peter MacLaren. Also Michael Levine, assisting the committee with documenting the proposal.

Present from the Public:

Robin Morris, Kelly Mazey

The meeting was called to order by MRV FLO Chair Jared at 11:05AM.

Intro by Jared covering background of our committee, set up as sub-committee of the MRVPD in cooperation with the MRV Chamber. At this meeting we are making a proposal for feedback and dialog - not an edict.

Bob then presented the current proposal based on the committee's work over the last 8 months, building on the prior 4 years of community engagement and studies.

The floor was then opened for questions and discussion.

- Lori asked for confirmation that the priorities of affordable housing and transportation are addressed? The answer was yes.
- June expressed concern about not having specific budget targets, as in specific investments that will be made in the early years, as opposed to general buckets. Bob answered that the plan is being respectful of the organizations that could be funded to bring forward their plans, rather than having the FLO dictate what is done. Jared added we will try to provide more specific illustrations of examples.
- June asked if we can plan for a single MRV entity as opposed to three towns. Answered that while such an approach has lots of merit it is not realistic in the short term. However it was emphasized that the FLO is deliberately a Valley wide initiative, recognizing that the Valley to a very large extent is a single economic entity.
- June asked about the analysis that 55% of the proposed proceeds would come from visitors and only 12% from residents. Some discussion followed about the detailed research that formed the basis of these figures and that the FLO Committee are confident that they are very close estimates. A copy of the analysis will be sent to June.
- Robin stated that he likes the idea of the FLO, but he is concerned about the implementation. How do we really address workforce housing aspects, and the underlying planning and infrastructure issues. Need to make it a higher priority as a pre-requisite to addressing the other areas. More funding for this area up front is a better plan. Suggested that we have "under-balanced" the 26% for Community Projects. While

we need to have some fixed allocations (e.g. staff) we should maximize flexibility based on proposals. Jared replied that while the actual detailed proposal provided for considerable flexibility in how the funds are allocated among the investment areas, we note Robin's comments as excellent input to improving how the plan is laid out. We will update to ensure the Commissioners have the mandate to address priorities using the major part of the available funds.

- Robin noted that we need to have full integration with town planning and commitment. Maybe think about it as a 10-year plan, as sustainable availability of funding is key. Jared responded that the process fully anticipates this type of tight coordination, particularly as it would be the towns carrying out these types of projects. Robin also suggested that TIFF district opportunities should be considered. Steve pointed out that criteria have become more difficult although there may be possibilities to leverage TIFF.
- Robin pointed to the need to have a quality process for assessing grant requests. Jared answered that our proposed method of selecting the Commissioners, and the associated Bylaws that have been prepared to guide their work, is designed to ensure a quality, accountable and transparent process for allocating the funds.
- June asked what is the launch process? Bob & Jared replied that these details are now being addressed. Following the presentation to the Select Board on Tuesday November 13th, two public meetings will be planned in each of December and January. Then the details of the voting will be warned by January 17th for the vote at the town meetings in March. A sub-committee is being set up to plan the full details of the roll-out and communication plan – with its first meeting immediately following this meeting.
- In response to a request for copies of the proposal, Joshua advised that the material will all be posted on a new page on the mrvpd.org website shortly.

Following discussion Peter then pointed out to the MRV CC Board that one of the important aspects of the FLO would be to provide sustainable funding to significantly ramp up the work the Chamber is already doing in the areas of Destination Marketing and supporting Valley businesses, which will both lead to improving the local economy and the success of local businesses.

Lori then moved that the Chamber Board support the ongoing work of the MRV FLO Committee to continue to gather feedback to improve and fine tune the proposal, leading to a vote at Town Meeting in March 2019, subject to the approval of the Select Boards. Seconded by June and carried unanimously.

Peter then moved that the MRVPD Steering Committee support the ongoing work of the MRV FLO Committee to continue to gather feedback to improve and fine tune the proposal, leading to a vote at Town Meeting in March 2019, subject to the approval of the Select Boards. Seconded by Jared and carried unanimously.

Jared then thanked the members of the MRVPD Steering Committee, the Chamber Board, and members of the public for their participation and feedback. This part of the meeting was closed at approximately 12:30PM.

After a short break the Committee reconvened at about 12:45PM.

Guests Jim Tabor, Ned Farquhar and Eric Friedman joined us, all of whom have volunteered to assist in thinking through the roll-out planning.

A short discussion ensued reviewing the excellent feedback from the prior meeting. Including:

- Do we need examples of investments - e.g. what other communities have done? What could be done here? We agreed we need some "aspirational" outcomes, offered as examples, not definitive.
- Clearly there is high importance of waste water management as a precursor to addressing many of the other challenges. We need to emphasize this aspect as one of the key areas that FLO funding can support.
- We agreed that we should change the funding process to have some fixed base allocations, with maximum flexibility for the rest to ensure the Commissioners have a clear mandate to fund larger high priority, probably multi-year projects. We agreed that specific % are really not realistic.
- We need to emphasize that the FLO process envisages including multi-year opportunities, along with the use of Reserves to allow response for significant size longer-term projects. In fact the sustainable ongoing nature of the FLO makes it uniquely ideal for funding multi-year projects.

Bob & Peter & Michael agreed to update the Case Document and Bylaws to reflect this change in emphasis and then will circulate for finals comments. Once agreed we will send updated Case Document to members of Select Boards ahead of Tuesday's presentation.

We then discussed the roll out plan. Points included

- Eric reminded us that process details less important than the big picture messages when it comes to informing residents. We need to make messages aspirational. Easy to have people glaze over with too much detail.
- We need an innovative approach, with a focus on social media focused as part of cohesive plan.
- Instagram & Facebooking. Aspirational images. Need to link back to source material on the website.
- Include 15 second video clips as part of the message. Lisa has offered use of MRVTV studio.
- We also discussed the importance of the Valley Reporter. We need to continue to be proactive in working with Lisa to get information rolled out and be ready to rapidly address any feedback that gets published.
- We need to be sure to answer questions in a way that generates positive engagement.
- We need a three-point consistent message that we all use – Bob will propose a draft for comment.
- Who can quarterback this? Jim, Jasmine & Eric agreed to be the steering team. But we need a resource to make it all happen.
- Ideas include a college intern. Jared will discuss with Terry Kellogg and Mariah to see if they have recommendations. There may be other local talent, and all ideas are welcome!

Other elements of the roll out:

- Ned can communicate to non-profits on the benefits that the FLO can bring to providing a new source of funding.
- The Chamber plans a 30 minute presentation about the FLO on Tuesday December 4th at 9:00AM at the Coffee & Conversation.
- As noted, public meetings in early December and early January are part of the plan. Lawson's might be a good location for one or both if they are willing, timed to start when they normally close. To be discussed further.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30PM.

Next meetings:

- Presentation to joint Select Boards at 7:00PM on Tuesday November 13th at Waitsfield Town Office
- Next MRV FLO Committee at 2:00PM on Wednesday 14th at Waitsfield Town Office