



MINUTES

November 19, 2015

5:30 PM

Brown Cow Cafe - Main Street, Bennington

Present: Dan Monks (Bennington), Greg VanHouten (Local Business), Ed Shea (Woodford), Nancy Faesy (Dorset), John LaVecchia (Dorset), Megan Randall (Pownal), Scott Printz (Energy), Sheilah Printz (Public Health), Charles Rockwell (Rupert), Bruce Lierman (Transportation), Bill Deveneau (Bennington), Suzy dePeyster (Sandgate), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Phil Chapman (Rupert), Meg Cottam (Glastenbury), Charlie Edson (Old Bennington), Paul Myers (Peru)

Others: Kayla Becker, Maryann St. John, Rep. Bill Botzow, Valerie dePeyster, Tim Scoggins, Derek Carson (Bennington Banner), Wayn Goodman

BCRC Staff: Jim Henderson, Mark Anders, Michael Batchner, Jim Sullivan, Kiah Morris

I. Approval of September Minutes

Motion by Deveneau with second by Shea to approve the Minutes as presented. Passed unanimously.

II. Alliance for Community Transformations and Drug Free Community Grant

Kiah Morris, Director of the Alliance for Community Transformations (ACT) presented an overview of the Drug Free Community program (see attached presentation).

Morris provided background on ACT, a community based organization, and its mission. Key areas of focus are youth empowerment and engagement, substance abuse and tobacco prevention, and healthy and active living.

Drug Free Community Grant - a federal program, designed to establish and strengthen collaboration to reduce substance abuse. Discussed support provided by HAYC3 organization in Hoosick Falls. ACT was one of two newly funded coalitions in Vermont.

Goals: increase community collaboration, provide substance abuse information, prevent youth alcohol and marijuana use, support youth empowerment, change the physical environment to reduce risk factors.

Question: What kind of message would be sent if marijuana were legalized? A: This is a concern; sends a complex message potentially inferring that it is not unhealthy or dangerous.

Discussed number of youth directly impacted by ACT programs.

III. Bennington Bike-Ped Projects

Mark Anders, BCRC's transportation program manager, presented information on recent bicycle and pedestrian projects in Bennington (presentation attached). Focused on a concentration of projects on the north

side of Bennington where improvements are badly needed. Discussion included Bennington Pathway (rail-trail), Benmont Avenue improvements, Northside-Kocher connection, Willow Brook - Applegate path, and the "Ninja" path (a multi-use pathway).

Reviewed the recently funded (\$1.1 million grant) Ninja Path project section by section. Discussed challenges and opportunities along each section. Question: what about roundabout at Silk Road/Mattison Road/College Drive intersection? A: Still preferred alternative and long-range solution that will be pursued, so in the meantime, have an alternative design that will be implemented using town and Bennington College funding. Noted great support for the Ninja path provided by former Chamber of Commerce Director, Joann Erenhouse. People also raised the idea to connect covered bridges on a path along Walloomsac River, beginning at Silk Road. Noted importance of promoting the path to youth of the community to encourage use; considerable support and enthusiasm from Bennington College.

IV. Stormwater Management

Jim Henderson, BCRC's environmental program manager, presented on green stormwater infrastructure and low impact development - aspects of stormwater management (presentation attached).

BCRC is working on a range of related water quality issues with local governments, state agencies, and organizations such as the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance.

There are new requirements for agricultural practices, control/treatment of water from impervious surfaces, and management of stormwater flows from local and state highways.

Reviewed impacts of development on hydrology. Showed GIS studies completed for both Bennington and Manchester's developed centers. Overview of traditional stormwater management - collection, transport, and discharge of water to surface waters (often streams and rivers). Problems result with sediment and nutrient loading, erosion, damage to property and public infrastructure. Problems seen in both urban and rural settings.

New methods of dealing with stormwater: green stormwater infrastructure (techniques) and low impact development (planning and design). Maintain sites' predevelopment ecological and hydrological functions. Strategies available at watershed, community, and individual site scales.

Presented examples of a variety of green stormwater infrastructure techniques and measures municipalities can take to promote implementation of GSI and LID strategies.

Urged commissioners to bring information back to local officials: planning commissions, zoning administrators, zoning boards and development review boards. BCRC available to come to meetings at the town level.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.