

Agenda

Warren Selectboard – Joint Meeting with Fayston and Waitsfield Selectboards

Tuesday, November 13, 2019

7:00 PM

Waitsfield Town Offices

7:00 PM – Presentation of proposal on the Mad River Valley FLO (Mad River Valley for Local Opportunities (FLO)).



MAD RIVER VALLEY

VERMONT

FLO presentation to three Select Boards 13Nov2018

Present:

All the MRV Vitality team.

Some but not all SB members.

- Sal Spinoso, Jon Jamieson, Darryl Forrest, Paul Hartshorn from Waitsfield. Paul arrived almost at the end, after the presentation.
- Andy Cunningham, Bob Ackland, Randy Graves, Mary Alberti, Luke Youmell from Warren
- Jared Cadwell, Chuck Martel, Michael Jordan from Fayston

Some members of public. Lisa Loomis, Valley Reporter, by phone.

Jared opened the meeting at 7PM.

Jared nominated Andy Cunningham as chair for this meeting. Bob seconded. Carried.

Public Comments - none.

Intro from Jared as Chair of the MRV Vitality Committee. We are presenting this evening a draft presentation based on 6 months of work, building on at least 4 years of studies and consultation. Looking for feedback & input from Select Boards to determine where to from here.

Bob presented a slightly updated version of the presentation from last week.

Questions & comments:

- Joanie Kavanaugh (public) expressed concern about tax impact on building material, including impact on Allen Lumber, impacting the cost of housing. Donald Simonini pointed out the impact on the overall price was quite small.
- Joanie K. asked can we do it with lower % or narrower tax? Jared responded that the needs are such that we are recommending the 1% across all categories.
- Tim Seniff (public) expressed concerned at the impact on restaurants. Feels that will impact business. Pricing us out of the market. Do we need this? Joanie: Example of success is Burke, which has no LOT. Jon pointed out (later in the meeting) that Burke charges \$20 a time to use their trails which brings in \$1.2M towards running the trail system.
- Chuck Martel (Fayston) asked about how well thought through is the detail? Jared indicated that this is a work in progress. We are looking for feedback to get to a final proposal for a vote.
- Chuck asked if we need more specifics on what will be accomplished before we vote. Bob said we can't really be that definitive on how the funds will be used, only illustrate possibilities - the process is intended to be responsive to needs over the long term.
- Sal Spinoso (Waitsfield) concerned that without detail of how this will work the process can go off the rails. Need the right level of detail.
- Jared then pointed out that behind the presentation there is a detailed Case Document outlining our current proposal in much more detail and draft bylaws to guide the work of the

Commissioners. Bob advised that this material will be available on the MRVPD website by Thursday and encouraged all Select Board members to read through it and provide feedback.

- Sal asked what we lose by doing this.
- Sal pointed out that MRVPD is a creation of the SBs, so concerned that the tail is wagging the dog by making this kind of proposal. Should the Boards not have been consulted first? This concern seemed in part that he had first read about it in the Valley Reporter before the MRVPD came to consult the Select Boards.
- Jared responded that the PD is doing what it was tasked to do by its MOU and reminded everyone that it is composed of reps of the Select Boards, Planning Commissions, Chamber and Sugarbush. Sal seemed to accept Jared's explanation on process.
- Sal noted that Waitsfield had considered LOT before and did not pursue it.
- Sal expressed concern about waste water: he seemed to have the impression that by accepting the proposal the issues from the past on this topic would come back on the table and cause concerns. Jon commented that this concern seemed overblown. Bob pointed out that the FLO process is proposed to provide financial resources for the towns and others to move forward with plans that benefit the valley – it is not going to be the implementer.
- Marie ? (public) commented referencing her role as a greeter at the Visitor Information Center. We need vibrancy, and we currently do have a challenge in that regard - e.g. this past holiday weekend several restaurants were closed. We need to look at the big picture and move forward. She is excited about the proposal.
- John Stokes (public) referenced back to alleged bait and switch of tax initiative in 1997 in Waitsfield and is concerned this proposal may be the same. Feels the \$2 per person per month impact on residents may be low. Bob and Donald pointed out that we had made a detailed analysis and if anything, the estimate is high.
- Andy Cunningham (Warren) pointed out that the presentation missed pointing out that we will be relieving property taxes e.g. the Rec District contribution. Bob pointed out that grant matches could now come from the FLO, another relief on town budgets and property taxes. Andy also pointed out that needs for Fire dept equipment etc. can now be funded this way. Jared summarized that as the new approach evolves it will relieve town budgets and property taxes from several aspects.
- Andy asked what the outcome was of the presentation to the MRVPD Steering Committee and Chamber Board last Wednesday November 7th. Peter responded that each of the Committee and Board unanimously passed motions that they 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, subject to the approval of the Select Boards.
- Darryl Forrest pointed out that ad hoc requests, such as the recent request for the trail signage, would now have another source of funds, not only reducing funding from the towns but also avoiding the extensive time needed to discuss and decide on these requests at the Select Board.
- Jon Jamieson (Waitsfield) emphasized that we need to invest in the community; the proposed FLO is a good way to do this.
- Mary Albertii (Warren) feels it may impact restaurants. However, sees need for housing, building & maintaining trails, so likes the overall proposal.
- Chuck Martel pointed out that we don't have resources to do things that probably should be done, so we do need to find a way to move forward.
- Chuck Martel asked about process from here on. Bob asked for support from Select Boards to go to next steps for public dialog. (Jared commented on this later also – see below.)

- Randy Graves (Warren) likes the fact that we have put the work into making the proposal. Lived here longer than anyone in the valley other than Paul Hartshorn! We are lucky to have the opportunity to steer the ship a little bit and manage things locally.
- Paul (Waitsfield) arrived at this point and expressed concerned about lack of “local” control. His concern is moving from local control to a committee that is not totally controlled by Waitsfield. Acknowledged that he has not seen the presentation. Bob asked him to look at the details as in his view the concern is unfounded
- Jared Cadwell recommended to his colleagues on Selectboards to review what they heard, what they will see online, discuss the proposals, and come to a recommendation of: do we proceed or stop, and if we proceed what is a reasonable timeline?
- Sal commented that at some level the proposal has validity but concerned that e.g. Waitsfield has only a voice on a commission, not total control. Need safeguards to protect each town’s interest on larger projects. Maybe the process details that he has not yet read deal with this but needs to be checked and clear.
- Sal feels that we have been able to make progress. However, while the proposed process may be more efficient at getting things done, is it the right thing? Is it taking over from the towns?
- Bob Ackland & Jared Cadwell feel that we are addressing this, the FLO responds to proposals, does not dictate them.
- Peter MacLaren (Chamber) reiterated that the FLO was proposed as a funding facilitator for the towns and other Valley organizations to propose worthy projects under their control, and that all the current town processes for approving projects would still be there.
- Randy sees the FLO as a potential way to move forward. However, there is certainly an option to do nothing. We should consider that too and assess the pros and cons.
- Sal expressed appreciation for the meeting and the work that has been done.

Andy moved to adjourn. Sal seconded. Carried.

Meeting adjourned at about 9:15PM.