

RECREATION GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING

Joint Municipal Survey Committee

Meeting Minutes: August 16, 2016

Town offices, 81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

RGSC Present: Michael Smith, Raj Chawla, Kim Maiberger, Erika Baldasaro, Betzi Bilodeau, Jason DiRosa, Lori Houghton, Max Levy

RGSC Absent: Christine Packard, Theresa Fletcher

Administrators present: Brad Luck – EJRP, Ally Vile – Essex Parks and Rec

Others present: Irene Wrenner (15 Thrush Lane), George Dunbar (9 Juniper Ridge Road), John Sheppard (55 Greenfield Road)

Call to Order: Michael Smith called meeting to order at 7:05pm

Agenda additions or changes: Transition Team Tasks document in regards to outreach discussion

Public to be heard: None from public. Lori and Max gave a brief update to the 8/15/16 SB meeting as a few members were not in attendance in regards to public to be heard, the support given at the meeting – as well as community members who questioned the process, the communications policy with the SB and the overall process of RGSC forming and working through the last 4.5 months.

Approval of minutes: Max moved, Lori 2nd discussion

Amendments: Max had 2 corrections to note: asked for wording on page 4 to state that the committee was appointed unanimously by all members of the Selectboard. Also, the note about a gentleman in the audience opined the handout, etc....to be removed from the minutes.

Approved 8-0 in favor to minutes with amendments.

Transition Team Update: Brad gave the update of the co-lead meeting by Brad and Ally to the TOE and CCSU staff, along with department staff in attendance. The presentation by the RGSC was given by the two of them with modifications and updates related to specific transition needs for staff. Everyone seemed engaged and prepared to help work on tasks to help address current and future questions. They were asked to review the task list, add, remove and detail out specifics to then come back to Brad and Ally in a few weeks in time for RGSC meeting to prepare for the initial public forums. Brad reminded the RGSC that he and Ally will prepare their EPR & EJRP proposed budgets for FY18 as well as work on a proposed ECPR budget to start comparing numbers and give a better picture to the voters. This topic will remain on the upcoming RGSC agendas so updates and clarifying questions can be processed in enough time to answer community members on a regular basis and at the forums.

Public Information & Outreach: Keeley Schill and Liz Subin were asked to join tonight's meeting; however, the EWECUUSD had a Board meeting at the same time.

Max reminded the RGSC that the point of the public forums were to inform and give pros and cons to the public and to not tell them how to vote.

Lori spoke in regards to the RED Study and noted that one person was the designated voice for communication. She feels there is a lot of misconception to how each department functions now and feels it is important to communicate that to the community so they understand the parks and recreation current processes and how the departments could work in the future. Erika agreed it is a perfect time to get that basic information out there now to have a starting point so people can really see how the future will be different – good & bad. Raj brought up how a conversation on social media today generated general questions about how the two entities are even governed. Lori believes that if one person is the name out there for the information (compared to Brendan Kinney from the RED Study), but the person is part of the communications sub-committee, then everyone knows where their information should come from and trusts the resource. Lori was happy to volunteer to be the “name” to the public communication; however, she was hesitant due to her Trustees association. Erika volunteered to be the “name” out there for people.

ACTION: Lori offered to contact Front Porch Forum to give Erika access to all 9 neighborhoods for the fall timeframe.

Max and Raj asked if others could be brought in to the outreach/communications sub-committees and also if people could be recruited. The RGSC decided to tackle that as it comes up.

Outreach efforts and upcoming public forums: Raj thought there should be a designated group to present at the forums and then taking that information back to the RGSC, which then Erika would communicate through neighborhood posts.

Max feels there are three types of communication – RGSC meetings, social media and other outreach (handout information with contact information). Ally mentioned Erika should have a specific email address that is advertised on these communications pieces so it relates to RGSC. Brad brought up the new domain of www.essexrec.org and how it is possible to create XXXX@essexrec.org email addresses as necessary.

Committee members broke down the communications efforts so it is spread between all active members.

Lori asked about public forum logistics and asked if Staff could help prep those forums – pens, paper, audio, visual, etc.

Brad spoke to those who will present at public forums will have time between now and then to help with basic outreach now before the presentations. He suggested only splitting into two groups – outreach and research. Raj wanted clarification on how communication would take place in between meetings and it was confirmed that five or less committee members are allowed to email/meet as six members make quorum.

Betzi noted that the RED Study did not choose to have a social media page and any social media responses needs to be quick. Lori suggested the RED Study be asked how they managed getting information back to posted questions. Erika noted that social media can spiral and evolve, and it was stressed to monitor the EssexVT and DowntownEJ Facebook pages to consistently link the webpage.

Jason and Raj are interested in gathering information for the forums and help vet the information that will be communicated in general.

Max would like to be on the outreach subgroup, Jason noted he wanted to make sure there was an even spread of members on each subgroup. Betzi wanted clarification on the public forum and outreach committee – Lori said to make sure all data is gathered in prep for forums, and outreach was researching what other local events were going to take place where RGSC information could be handed out (with permission). Brad added that someone from the public forums subgroup needed to outline the format so it stayed consistent each time, how people could ask questions, and overall structure. Kim volunteered to be on the outreach subgroup. Betzi will be on the social media/news subgroup.

Subgroups were formed as:

OUTREACH & FORUMS – Kim, Max, Lori, Christine, Michael

R & D (Research & Discussion) – Erika, Betzi, Jason, Theresa, Raj

Lori suggested that each subgroup designate a chair to keep the meetings moving. Kim and Betzi will lead their subgroups. Max asked that each subgroup come with an outline for the next RGSC meeting. Brad and Ally will be staff resources (or will designate staff) and will work to attend each subgroup meetings.

ACTION: Brad will get Erika an email address from the new site – www.essexrec.org.

Before breaking out into subgroups to plan first steps, the RGSC scheduled their next meeting.

ACTION: Next meeting for RGSC is September 1st, 2016 @ 7pm, location TBD. Lori requested Brad and Ally to see if Liz and Keeley are available to join that meeting.

Members discussed getting communication out during the Champlain Valley Fair. Ally offered the suggestion of information being available at the Rotary and Essex Lions tables.

ACTION: Max will confirm that RGSC information can be distributed at the Rotary table at the CV Fair. Ally or Brad will connect with the Lions regarding their table.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07pm