

MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

The Mad River Valley Planning District was created to carry out a program of planning directed toward the physical, social, economic, fiscal, environmental, cultural and aesthetic well being of the Towns of Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren.

Following is a summary of the Mad River Valley Planning District projects and initiatives during 2007.

Select Board Funding Forum

The Planning District organized a Three Town Select Board Meeting in November to provide an opportunity for groups and organizations to present their annual funding requests. Groups that participated included - the Mad River Solid Waste Alliance, The Mad River Health Center, the Mad River Seniors, GMTA, the Mad River Recreation District, and the Mad River Valley Planning District. In addition, Peter Laskowski presented a proposal for a Valley-wide Constable's Association. This meeting was an effective way for Valley groups to present their funding requests and for the three Select Boards to talk together about Valley issues.

Continuing Work from 2006

Route 100 Byway Designation - During 2007 we had three public hearings on the Route 100 Byway Extension, one sponsored by the Planning District and one for the Scenery Preservation Council, who voted to approve and send our designation request on to the Transportation Board. The final step was a Transportation Board public hearing. In late December, the Route 100 and 17 Byway Extension did receive approval as a Vermont Byways and is now eligible for federal grant dollars for signage, kiosks, trail enhancements and possible easements to assist the Mad River Path in being completed from Warren to Moretown. The Byways Management Plan was completed through a grant from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

The Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resources grant for the study in Waitsfield and Fayston was closed out in early 2007, with Warren starting their study at about the same time. The Planning District assisted all three Towns in making landowner permission contacts. By May of 2008, we will have quality mapping of all three towns available as a resource for the Valley.

Mad River Path

The Mad River Path completion continues to be a high priority of the Planning District. The Steering Committee and Executive Director continue to work with the Path Association in the areas of grants, landowner contacts and public awareness of the benefits of the Mad River Path. In May, the PD hosted a very beneficial Mad Path Summit with representatives from the Select Boards, Planning Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Chamber and Planning District Steering Committee.

Municipal Education

In January, the Planning District sponsored a workshop on Communication and Consensus, through a Municipal Education Grant. Additional workshops are being planned for the spring of 2008.

Regional Activities

The Planning District ED is involved with the regional Brownfields Committee (Warren has received two grants for the Town Garage area and the old Town Dump), and the Central Vermont Collaborative and Housing Partnership, which works to bring affordable housing to the area and assists with legislation to benefit housing. In addition, the ED serves as an active member of the Central Vermont Community Land Trust's Projects Committee, and in December was elected to the CVCLT Board of Trustees.

Kingsbury Community Farm

The Planning District worked on a Committee with representatives from the Vermont Land Trust, the Friends of the Mad River, the Warren Conservation Commission, the Mad River Path Association, Yestermorrow, the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition and the Localvores to complete the community purchase of the Kingsbury Farm. The Vermont Land Trust is the interim owner while the community groups, with extensive Valley community input, work on their ownership plan for 2008. The Farm will combine agricultural production with Community and educational uses. Sustainable Agriculture is a Planning District priority.

Mad River Valley Housing Coalition

The Housing Coalition met regularly during this year to implement strategies in the Mad River Valley Housing Study completed in 2006. We are working closely with the Towns and private developers to provide more affordable/work force housing in the Valley with the goal of keeping our young folks here, allowing businesses to come to and stay in the Mad River Valley and keeping this Valley diverse. One current project is an Accessory Apartment program - Home +.

Energy Self-sufficiency

The Planning District continues to work with Efficiency Vermont, the Mad River Sustainability Group, Yestermorrow, Town Energy groups and others to coordinate conservation and energy related activities. Our current project is scheduling a Valley Weatherization workshop.

Crime and Police Protection

The Planning District continues to follow the Neighborhood Watch program, meet with police representatives, and research what other Towns are doing for police protection. We have met with Peter Laskowski regarding a Constables' Association which could provide us with quicker response and a community presence to assist with being a crime deterrent and educational resource.

Valley Futures Network

In August the Planning District convened a meeting of 25 Valley representatives to discuss growing leadership in the Valley Towns. The diverse group included people from all 4 Valley towns, landowners, renters, part-time residents, business people, professionals, non-profit folks, contractors etc and met over a full day at Knoll Farm. Since then various project oriented committees have met and early in 2008 we will move forward with a mission statement and engage the entire Valley community in growing individual leadership around the key issues affecting the landscape of our Community: housing, energy, recreation, food security and local commerce

2008 Activities

The Planning District will continue activities in the areas of Work Force Housing, Energy Initiatives, Sustainable Agriculture, public transit, inter-town collaboration and education, update and review of data trends, and planning. The Director is also involved with the Waitsfield Sewer and Water Task Force, VEDA (The Valley Economic Development Association), the Rural Resource Commission and the Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership.

Budget

The Planning District is funded through contributions from each Town and Sugarbush Resort. This year's funding request is \$19,100 from each funder, an amount which has remained unchanged for seven years. MRVPD activities are overseen by a seven member Steering Committee, consisting of a Select Board member and Planning Commissioner from each Town, and representatives from Sugarbush, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC). Meetings are open to the public and usually held the third Thursday of each month at the General Wait house in Waitsfield at 7pm. The Executive Director, Linda Lloyd, can be reached at 496-7173 or mrvpd@madrivier.com.