

# ***Bristol CORE Meeting Minutes***

October 18, 2017

Present: Ian Albinson, Kelly Hamshaw, Carolyn Ashby, Valerie Capels

- I. Call to order
- II. Approval of minutes from last meeting September 20, 2017
- III. **Open issues**

A. Board Members - need more folks to get to preferred # and then update bylaws. Ian has talked with Aidan Lenihan, who is on the Pocock Rocks team and is interested (just not available this morning). Other folks being cultivated: Shawna Sherwin, John Monks, Jess Messer, Adam Laperle (usu. says he's too busy), Laura Mack (Kelly has talked to her, sounds like it's a time issue). The Cohousing folks are another pool of potential members; Kelly mentioned Mark Adams, and Ian mentioned Penny Klein.

B. Bristol Coworking - awaiting an update from John Moyers on the status of the Old Trading Post location, availability of space depends on decision from prospective tenant. Might be possible to rent part of space direct from John or from new tenant; either way, do we want to be beholden for a monthly rent amount? probably not... too risky. Will see what happens with space and revisit.

C. Cool Yule Planning Group - first meeting held, attended by Melissa Hernandez (Recycled Reading), Kevin Hanson (Hogback Brewing), John Monks (VT Treegoods), Carol Wells (Bristol Suites, etc.), Ian and Carolyn. Jess Messer was not available that morning but plans to be at next.

Chocolate Walk and Lumen on the calendar for Friday December 1 and 22

Discussion of moving Lumen earlier; decided against. Discussion of then adding a third event mid-month to satisfy Melissa's request for attracting earlier shoppers. Possibly something music-centered, maybe tie-ins with other businesses hosting events at same time. CORE will need someone to step up as the organizer (Melissa?).

Valerie asked about coordinated sales events. Consensus is that those have been difficult to organize and pull off in the past (at other times like Harvest Fest) and not particularly welcomed by retailers.

Chocolate Walk - Tandem is looking to add a food truck this year along with their Holiday Market; CORE will again coordinate additional craft vendors in the Bristol Bakery space, might explore using the vacant storefront as overflow or add some music/dancing.

Lumen - late "season" family event at time not many other events are happening, fire performers have been booked, food and logistics are next up for planning.

## **IV. New business**

A. 2018 Historic Preservation and Downtown Conference - Lisa Ryan from Preservation Trust will be coming to town on October 26, sometime between 9am and noon to start talking over preliminaries and logistics; Carolyn will attend. Darla (RecDept) is also in the loop.

B. Bike FixIt stations - the design is currently being improved so Local Motion suggested waiting to order until new design is available, which would put this off into the spring. Need concrete for base, not asphalt. Ian has been talking to Carol Wells about possibility of locating at Old School House. Carolyn brought up possibility of back corner south of Town Office entrances; there is space there without interfering with handicap path; would be nice way for town to encourage green transportation, show support with station and bike rack right at the town office. Valerie noted next board meetings on Nov 6 and 20, would it be possible to provide a rendering for them to consider.

C. VTrans and ACCD planning grants - Better Connections grant related to transportation, 35-67k with 10% community match, due January 2018 with required pre-app meeting in December. Given the re-paving planned for 2020, a possible option would be to use this grant as a way to plan for wider improvements (storm water - would they consider rain gardens?, pedestrian, cycle, traffic calming, enhanced crosswalks, problem spot in front of post office, etc.) along the same corridor as the re-paving. Could also tie in to improved access to high school and the Stoney Hill development. Ian will forward info to Valerie.

D. National Life Group Main Street Grant - Foundation has accumulated “extra” money and is offering a new pilot grant based on their Main Street recognition program and the local (Montpelier) funding they have always done (ie, pocket park where building burned down, Langdon Street arts event). Single grant, 50k, only downtown organizations are eligible (so 1 in 24 chance). Open-ended, they want to see what organizations propose. Focus on “doing good” for local economy, culture, future of town. Application available by November 15 and due by December 31.

Some ideas - hire an economic development person (part-time, temporary) to work on multiple projects that are “on the cusp” - like Stoney Hill, trails, housing, which all dovetail into the live/work/play theme. Temporary position but may also then prove the worth of exploring more permanent funding. - Trails seems to be doing fine on its own, may not need this grant. - Our other strategic plan projects are sidewalks and wayfinding, there are many other sources of funding for infrastructure. - Visual, tangible project, like the Main Street Makeover team, murals, public art projects. - Coworking or maker space, fund build out?

Need to keep in mind the “doing good” focus. Where would this funding do the most good in the community? Where do we go from here? Do we have a meeting with a small group to do brainstorming on that question? Maybe Kevin Harper, Porter Knight (trails), Darla, who else?

[skipped to V.B. since we were talking about it and then came back to Small Biz]

E. Small Business Saturday - November 25th, debating whether to set up a tent again this year as we have in the past. Last year, most of what we did was give our bags out to stores who needed more, so we could just distribute ahead of time and then \*not\* tent ourselves. We are signed up for the community organizer package again, so we'll get goodies to hand out [Ian will give to Carolyn to organize]. Most of their event suggestions are things that we already do at other times.

## V. Updates

### A. Downtown Retreat

State Economic Development - facilitates at higher level, but the Regional ec dev groups really do the work (speaking of which, ACEDC has a new director about whom the Midd folks seemed really excited), there is a legislative committee looking at bringing cohesion to the many training programs currently out there, focusing on trades, nursing, and advanced manufacturing as areas where we have jobs but not enough folks to fill them, emphasized support and growth of existing businesses by capitalizing on local assets being the best strategy. (which led nicely into...)

Outdoor Recreation - trails (or other outdoor rec assets) as an economic development engine, recent listening forums around the state, no (new) money for this as of yet, there are several funding pools already available

ThinkVermont - new website (and campaign) focussed on non-tourism marketing to folks with aim of moving either business or personally to VT, running an Innovation Spaces conference on October 26 (Ian is planning to attend)

Waterbury Ec Dev model - their structure (Vergennes is similar) is that Revitalizing Waterbury has a contract with the town to provide economic development services. RW is then choosing to use that funding to hire a (full-time) staff person (NOT their executive director) to perform that work. The Ec Dev staff person reports to a Board Committee, not the Exec Dir. So town \$ goes to RW, RW hires ec dev staff to do townwide ec dev work, staff is supervised by RW Board. Not being a municipal employee has the benefit of greater confidentiality for businesses and developers talking with the staff person, possibly less conflict (for instance, if position were also doing town zoning or planning). Valerie noted personal experience in difficulties of trying to do both in one job. Vergennes recently doubled their town funding with a similar contract, but they have a Board Committee doing the work rather than staff (who is a part-time marketing director). Ian may ask Danelle (Birong) to come talk to us about what they're doing.

Vergennes also talking about doing a TIF district. Valerie curious if Bristol has considered? Carolyn and Kelly skeptical that such a thing would make it past a first discussion; Bristol is not friendly to new taxes. Ian thinks it's worth putting out there.

Engaging Youth in Leadership - Shelburne and Manchester have each implemented programs to bring students onto town committees (except the select board), initiative needs a "champion" to then work with a liaison in the school, they have 2 students (one upperclass, one lower) per board, same interview/application process as for adults, positive impact for both students and other board members, various things to work out regarding voting/non-voting other legalities, not sure who'd we work with at the school, worth exploring. Ian will add to the Communications group discussion.

Roundtable discussion - Ian asked about local biz signage improvements, some towns had loan initiatives, used school programs. How to continue discussions like this year round? Will be starting a Facebook group (with Elissa from Waterbury).

### B. Local Community Initiatives

- students are actively working on two projects, research & case studies, identifying locations and possible funding, ideas and making proposals: 1) Main Street Makeover, creative placemaking, murals, pop-up projects, underutilized spaces, 2) wayfinding and other signage. Hoping that their proposals in December can be reviewed in January with an eye to possible implementation next summer. Valerie suggested a style of freestanding circular "you are here" sign/map combo that could highlight particular things, designed to be located in utility right of way, same as

something like parking meters, could have multiples.

Kelly noted some of the students were interested in coming down to help out with Chocolate Walk. Carolyn noted that the group that did last year was invaluable.

C. Trails Around Bristol - end of summer gathering recently, lots got done. First landowner dispute around town dump land, probably just going to leave it alone and wait until the land over the dump is available and then re-do trail then. Porter will be talking with landowners in other places (ie, along south street past the town portion of land) over the winter, would like to talk with us about signage and marketing.

## **VI. Misc**

A. Intersection plantings - CORE flower baskets will be coming down end of month, town mowing crew typically takes care of the intersection areas, just a reminder to cut them back for the winter in November please.

CORE will be doing the holiday decorating again, lights on lampposts, garland, etc. Can't do bell tower anymore for insurance reasons but would like to figure out how to make that happen again some time.

VII. **Next Meeting** – November 15 , 2017

VIII. Adjournment