

LVRTC Minutes

March 10, 2009, 6:30 pm
Stonegrill Restaurant & Pub

Full Committee Membership:	Steve Larrabee	Laird McDowell, <i>Chair</i>
Bethany Remers	Alan Spitzer	Dan Zucker, <i>Secretary</i>
Dave Polow	Zeke Zucker, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Mike O'Hara
Danny Hale	Mike Farmer	Julius 'Red' Goodman
Committee Members Absent:	Julius 'Red' Goodman	

Other Attendees:	Bryant Watson	All Robertson, <i>Project Engineer</i>
Jim Hill	Jesse Hudson	Pat Poulin
John Kaplan (VTrans)	Dave Gilderdale (VTrans)	Ethan Ready (Sen. Sanders' Office)
Ken Hoepfner		

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Laird.

Public Comments: None. Guest speaker Elisa Fitzgerald from WPTZ spoke about fundraising and special projects to promote the Special Projects program run by WPTZ and to offer their services for a reduced fee to market the LVRT project. This offer was presented part-way through the meeting at which time the LVRT did not go into executive session and the proceedings were temporarily suspended during Fitzgerald's presentation. The specifics of her offers are standard features of the WPTZ program and can be obtained from that source. A general discussion of her presentation ensued.

Secretary's Report:

Jim Hill asked that minutes from February be corrected to reflect the fact that he is not a member of the LVRTC. Report moved by Mike, seconded by Zeke. Report approved w/ Jim's correction.

Financial Report:

Danny H. reported that we have not received a financial accounting from VAST as of the meeting date. Bryant assured the committee that no significant expenditures have been paid (since the last accounting) other than recurring administrative costs. No formal action moved or approved.

Byrant Watson's Report:

- We're continuing to work w/ legislators to obtain funding via the 2010 budget or have our costs put into stimulus request.
- Asked legislators to match in-kind and other donations through VT Stimulus – possibly funded w/ gas tax (5¢/gal).
- Still have not heard on Act 250 jurisdictional opinion. We are approximately 73 days beyond the required 30-day period after submitting our findings. There is no official explanation from the district coordinators for the delay, nor is there any agency acting to enforce the 30-day response period. Committee discussed out 30-day response requirement has no enforceability element to the statute.

Alan Robertson's Report:

Alan handed out two documents:

- The first titled “Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT): Background Information on Permitting” covering the permitting requirements of transportation projects in Vermont.
- The second titled “Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Permitting Status”, constituting the regular monthly report Alan gives this committee. See that document for a complete reckoning.
- Alan offered the following highlights to his report:
 - No wildlife management areas abutting this project, but there are town forests and riparian areas, although none of those offer any procedural hurdles to this project's process.
 - Under the heading “Likely time to CE approval” Alan noted that the entire process is waiting for the Act 250 jurisdictional opinion which is now approximately 43 days late.
 - VAST will be seeking a permit without any fees (periodic or otherwise) from ANR.

- No Coastguard permits are needed, No Federal endangered species have been discovered, some “rare or threatened state-specified species of plant-life were found on the LVRT out in the western end (Highgate)”.

LAC Report (Bethany Remers):

- Bethany reported the LAC's willingness to host and compile a landowner GIS database. They are trying to obtain parcel data matched to the LVRT's list of Landowner's and generate maps for VAST, VTrans or any town w/ parcel data.
- Approved by-laws changes that the LVRTC must approve (as well as the VAST board, advised by the LVRTC). The board agreed to consider the changes and vote at the next meeting (April 8th, 2009).
- After an immediate review of the by-laws changes, Danny H. moved to approve the changes effective immediately. Seconded by Zeke. The changes were voted on and passed unanimously.

Friend of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Report:

- They hope to hear soon on the decision of an enhancement grant.
- RockArt Brewery may help promote the trail with a special beer.

Sub-Committee Reports:

- Law Enforcement:
 - Danny H. reported that he's requesting information for joint newsletter (w/ The Friends) from VAST, VTRANS, SHERRIF'S OFFICE, State Police, ...
 - Discussion of 11pm – 6am curfew. It was discussed that between the existing curfew, the proposed 6:30am-10:30am curfew, the signage and management plan documents differ – as well as signs in place offering conflicting information. VTrans confirmed that this was due to a premature installation of signs w/ new hours based on the text of the Management Plan.
- Communications: Red was not present. Laird confirmed that as far as he knew, all information on the website has been updated including Meeting Minutes & membership info.
- Maintenance: NTR
- Policy & Development: NTR
- Fund Raising: Ken offered documentation of his fundraising activity including:
 - Summary
 - Activity Detail
 - Details of the “Roundup Program” for raising funds by having merchants ask customers if they'd like to round up their purchase to the next full dollar amount. Discussion ensued about the need for a merchant agreement w/ the LVRTC. No action was taken.

New Business:

- Discussion w/ Ethan Ready about the possibility of obtaining a waiver for the 20% match for federal earmark. Ready reported this is not likely due to the varying status of funds of other groups that also have that requirement. A possibility is standalone legislation or a line-item in the 2010 Transportation Bill. General discussion ensued about earmarks, matching funds, Sanders' expectations/outlook, etc.
- Combined newsletter w/ Friends – March 25th deadline, Heidi coordinating, Laurel Ruggles layout out newsletter.
- Morrisville Bridge Project (presented by Dave P). Bridge is in need of replacement. Morristown picking up most of costs. Dave P suggested we upgrade rail trail bridge which parallels the public bridge. If we get that built as a pedestrian bridge, would ve win-win situation. Dave P. asked committee what we'd like to do. Alan said remove ties, put in decking and railings. Discussion included making this part of Morrisville/Hyde Park “showcase” section of trail. No action taken.
- Review of management plan revisions by VTrans. We reviewed plan revisions submitted by Trini Brassard in the context of edits made by member Mike O'Hara. There was much discussion, including the following specific notes:
 - Some changes from VTrans were grammatical or made to keep the tense of the plan consistent
 - Some changes were made to reflect facts that had changes since the MP was composed.
 - Some changes altered the intent or meaning of the original paragraphs with no explanation.
 - No modifications were annotated by VTrans so no clarifications of alterations existed.
 - Bethany R. spoke on behalf of the LAC when the section on trail use by motorized vehicles was discussed. The LAC advised that grooming and other regular maintenance outside of curfew be prohibited out of

deference to landowners.

- The committee agreed that in general the extent of the revisions altered the intent and the content too extensively to allow for further discussion in the time available or for any action to be taken.

Mike O'Hara moved the meeting be adjourned at 9:24. Danny H. seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Friends Report:

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Ethan Ready's Bernie Sanders Office Report: Nothing to report (Ethan was not present).

Sub-Committee Reports:

Communications: Nothing to report.

Maintenance: Nothing to report.

Policy & Development:

Fundraising:

New Business:

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XXXX moved to adjourn at 8:35pm, seconded by YYYYY