

Mad River Valley Recreation District
Minutes for monthly meeting, July 18, 2022

Attending: Laura Arnesen, Derek Bennett, Doug Bergstein, Peter Oliver, Alice Rogers, John Stokes, Shevonne Travers, Liza Walker
Absent: Molly Bagnato, Luke Foley, Mary Simmons

Meeting called to order at 6:37pm

- Board voted unanimously to add Derek Bennett as a new board member from Waitsfield, to replace Liza Walker, who is leaving the board by the end of the summer.
- Update on Mad River Park irrigation project - Laura reported that Kingsbury Construction has pledged a \$2,000 contribution, raising the current total of pledges and received monies to \$23,100. The MRVRD is in “an excellent position to achieve our fundraising goal” of roughly \$35,000, according to Laura. Additional likely or possible sources of contributions include Waitsfield Telecom, local PTOs, and Lawson’s Finest Liquids.
- Discussion of the upcoming Mad River Park Appreciation Day - Doug reported that the date for the event will be September 10, 11, or the following weekend. The question arose whether money should be allocated from the MRVRD budget to help cover expenses. The board hovered around an amount of \$500, but no action was taken; Doug said a decision could wait until the board’s August meeting. Among the possible expenses: music, awards, publicity, dunk tank. Doug and Peter agreed to meet in the next few days to flesh out event details.
- Strategic Plan update - Following up on a discussion of June’s MRVRD board meeting, Liza said it is important to update the strategic plan of five years ago to show “what we (the MRVRD) are up to now.” Alice emphasized the need to recolor the existing chart, showing all MRVRD initiatives, to show that the Rec District is making progress. There was further discussion on streamlining the grant application and allocation process, particularly in relation to budget timing. It was agreed that more in-depth discussion was in order for the board’s August meeting.
- E-bike loan program update - Local Motion will be lending two e-bikes to the MRVRD for the month of August, each to be loaned out to riders on a biweekly basis, for a total of 16 loans. Peter will act as coordinator of the program on behalf of the MRVRD, and Laura and Peter met recently with a Local Motion representative to go over the logistics of the program. Sign-up will be on-line through Local Motion, with a link to the sign-up page to be included on the MRVRD web site. An event is planned for August 9, to segue with a climate conference to be held that evening at American Flatbread, allowing local riders to test-ride the bikes for 15 minutes each. Peter said that volunteers will be needed to help the program run smoothly and encouraged board members to help in the volunteer recruitment process.

- Visioning meetings - Laura reported that visioning meetings are underway among various Valley recreation entities to discuss the future overall interface between trails/recreation and the environment/conservation groups. A representative of the MRVRD board should be involved with these meetings as they move forward. Laura reported participating in a site visit of the VOREC project with the Waitsfield select board, which did not want to be financially responsible for maintenance of the path segment leading into Irasville. Could the MRVRD help?
- Plans for a dog park - Laura reported that Amy Tomasso was working on a grant from the state to help fund a dog park at the Warren School. What should the MRVRD's role be in this project, both in funding and management? Because a dog park would help relieve the problem of unleashed dogs on Valley trails, several board members believed that the MRVRD has a legitimate role in promoting and managing a dog park. More discussion is in order. Derek agreed to take the lead in looking into project details and how the MRVRD might fit in.
- A review of the MRVRD financials - As the VOREC program progresses, Laura noted that it would be necessary to create a separate bank account for VOREC income and expenses. VOREC operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning funds from VOREC will not be received until expenses are submitted. Hence, there is no VOREC money currently available to open an account. However, Doug said he would open an account using \$5,000 the board had already targeted in the budget for VOREC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.