

Mad River Valley Recreation District Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Board members attending in person: Alice Rogers, Luke Foley, and Doug Bergstein

Attending via Zoom: Peter Oliver, Cory Ayotte, John Stokes, and Laura Arnesen (Executive Director)

Absent: Mary Simmons, Gina Gaidys, Molly Bagnato

1. Public comment, review agenda, and approve draft minutes from February 20, 2024 meeting. (5 min.)

Luke Foley motioned to approve the minutes from February 20th without changes. John Stokes seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2. Mad River Park update including Waitsfield Telecom's annual Easter Egg hunt on Saturday, March 23. (10 min.)

The Easter Egg event is this upcoming Saturday. At the moment, there is no plowing needed for the event. Doug asked a question about downed pine trees in the parking lot area. Is MRVRD responsible for them? Bear inquired about them. Laura will ask if the trees are on MRVRD's parcel. Doug can work to remove the trees in approximately three weeks. Laura updated that MRVRD will have three port-o-lets for the upcoming spring season and extra cleanings. Two for the summer - if extra cleanings are needed during the summer they could be charged to Highland Summer Camps.

The Fields Committee and Bear have done some research on the cost of cleaning and any recycling for port-o-lets. Wind River charges \$25/unit and can only recycle liquid waste. The company Wasted cleans at \$50/unit and they recycle liquid waste. Generally speaking, Wasted is about \$1,000 more expensive than Wind River. Laura will do more research on both companies on their chemical use, the types of vehicles they use to collect, and see if there are other environmental factors that we're not aware of.

The Fields Committee recommends that we shouldn't plow the parking lot in the future as it sees very little nordic ski use. That savings can be used for the additional port-o-let for part of the year and additional cleanings.

Lastly, the committee would like a spring cleanup day and would like to use the irrigation system themselves, no outside help (as needed per heat and rainfall levels).

3. Election of MRVRD Officers, Vote and Approve At-Large Members. (10 min.)

Alice mentioned that appointed members serve for two years. At-Large position terms are just one year. Per MRVRD's MOU, elections must happen during the first meeting after Town Meeting Day; which this meeting was. Peter is now Co-Secretary. Gina will become an At-Large member for Warren to accommodate Doug's move to Waitsfield.

Doug made a motion to nominate Alice to remain as Chair through 2027. Luke seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

Peter nominated Bear as the Waitsfield representative and the Vice Chair. Luke seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

Doug nominated Luke to continue to be the At-Large from Waitsfield. Alice seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

Luke nominated Molly as a representative from Fayston as well as Co-Secretary. Doug seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

John Stokes, the Fayston At-Large, decided to resign. Now there is a vacancy for that position. Laura will do outreach in the Valley Reporter and Front Porch Forum to find a replacement.

4. Monthly “column” in Valley Reporter, suggestions for name, and content for first column. (10 min.)

Alice shared that Lisa Loomis from the Valley Reporter commented on our many topic ideas for the column. The Valley Reporter column is meant as a tool for folks to learn more about what MRVRD does and what’s happening. The first column will be about Mud Season and how to recreate. Alice will be writing this. The next article will be about volunteerism and will coincide with many youth sports starting for the season. Luke loved the ideas and thinks it might be worth pitching the upcoming triathlon. They need 125 volunteers, and registration is low at the moment. Alice would like to see the May/June column be about bike safety. Peter would like to see the column have a standard, basic name as not to confuse readers.

5. Survey Analysis (15 min.)

Luke presented the data from our 272 survey respondents. He feels that people are becoming more aware of the MRVRD. Word of mouth is how most people are learning about MRVRD. Outside of word of mouth, the website was how 12% learned about MRVRD. That number was a nice surprise. It is hard to digest the info about how frequent users use the Brooks Field areas. It’s hard to say the exact number, and there are probably a lot more people that participate that didn’t fill out the form. Also, someone could have filled out the form for an entire family. Laura thinks we should ask partner groups what is the typical number of participants they see in their programs weekly. Luke shared the top recommendations for future things that don’t exist: A paved bike path, pool/rec center, improved skating/indoor skating, tennis/pickleball, backcountry skiing, adult sports, dogs, and better communication were the top suggestions. Peter is worried about sharing the data publicly because it isn’t “scientific” as it feels more anecdotal. Luke suggested that we should look at timestamps to see if there is correlation when clusters of answers came through. Alice said that this info is likely an internal document that we might share occasionally with partner organizations.

6. 2024 is the 30th Anniversary of MRVRD MOU, should we have an event or do anything special to celebrate and/or build awareness? (10 min.)

The MRVRD turned 30 years old in January.. A lot of conversation on whether to hold an event or do a private event with previous board members. It was decided that MRVRD would reach out to previous board members to ask for their favorite memories from the past and create a major events timeline for the

past 30 years of MRVRD. Doug has old minutes and will peruse them for names. The group will discuss next steps at the next meeting.

7. Ex. Director Report (10 min.):

- **VOREC - Update**

Laura reported that the \$92,000 reimbursement is moving through the process. No extension was granted on Recreation and Conservation Visioning (CRV). Mapping work has been done and is being presented to the CRV Steering Committee. The state might extend CRV if the RFP for Phase 2 work can't find a company to do the work (TBD). That was the original reason for the extension request. CRV must proceed as if there is no extension and all deliverables are due by 2024 year-end.

- **Website review**

Emails sent to all partners. Updating all links, etc as needed.

- **Moretown outreach**

Laura's presentation at the Moretown Town Meeting went well and some good questions were asked. Chris Stephenson, Chair of Moretown Rec Committee, sent Laura some suggestions for follow-up with the Moretown Select Board. We are still not sure how/when the SB will decide. Laura will pursue this. If Moretown decides to become a member of the MRVRD starting in Jan. 2025, they would be eligible to submit grant applications in 2024.

A motion was made by Luke to adjourn the meeting. Doug seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.