

March 15, 2018 SeVEDS minutes and notes

Present: Sarah Lang, Adam Grinold, Jen Stromsten, Bob Stevens, Mary Ann Kristiansen, Drew Richards, Josh Druke, Luke Stafford, Stephen Dotson, Ashley Havreluk, Susan McMahon, Gary Fox, Avery Schwenk, Konstanin von Krusenstiern

Regrets: Laura Sibilia, Meg Streeter, Bill Colvin, Randy Capitani, Bethaney LeClair

Bob comments on seeing activity in economy "For the first time in years I have several competitive proposals for retail space. Seeing it in industrial – BF building that sold recently. Feels encouraging."

Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes

Drew motion, Luke second, approved

Review of Paul Carroccio resume

to replace Carolyn Blitz on SeVEDS Board

Committed to attend meetings, represent Stratton region

Sarah context – asked to be more involved on our side of the Mountain, Laura suggested he join. He has strong connection to West Dover, LS & AG worked with him at that time.

Move to nominate Paul

Mary Ann motion, Stephen seconds, approved

Moving April SeVEDS meeting to lose fewer people due to school vacations

Keeping it on April 19 (lose as many people weeks before and after)

Town Meeting Report

On track for 12, \$80K+ in planned income if we are successful with Brattleboro

Inspiring was people suggesting that the level be reduced, and in multiple cases organically people standing to speak against that and defeat that.

Went to 50+ selectboard meetings got 400+ signatures

Stressing the value of communicating with towns, getting more towns, which will with

Brattleboro cover 75% of the county's population!

Brattleboro TM coming up – looking for more residents to caucus in and lend their voice to support BDCC & SeVEDS.

SoVermont Economic Development Summit

Web site is up & registration opens Monday

Program taking shape & Sponsorships starting to come in

Still need nominations, all will be nominated for Vermont Rising Stars to increase # from this region.

RED Update

Sarah – we have minutes from February – this is the beginning of committees exchanging minutes to stay on track with one another. There was interest in the RED “syllabus” for learning, which is also included.

YP Gala

Over 300, and after party at Echo had over 80 and people stayed out until 1.

And unveiled the Southern Vermont Young Professionals new logo!

Drew - what’s the end goal on an event like that and once you’ve built a critical mass?

YPs did a survey and had November retreat to envision what’s next and explore ideas like membership. Staff had lots of conversations at Gala to find out what the value of the org is to people coming here – for many it’s professional networking, and problem solving for people moving here. But how do we get people to self-identify, understand the benefits, and keep evolving it. Bob suggests leadership talk about advocacy as well. Volunteer engagement is leadership development employers recognize.

501C3

David Dunn anticipates having a completed application for April board meeting to review. Tax status of SeVEDS is an affiliate entity with the IRS that is currently a 501C6. We could not make a change until that was sorted out. As a 501C3 we can receive charitable contributions, not lobby. Currently some funds like VCF / McClure (\$20k) must come through via 501C3 (Career Center). We are trying to get to \$30k annually which will give us enough to launch this program. Bob – do we want an endowment?

CEDS Consultant

Luke describes the process a bit. See handout summarizing process and recommendations.

Motion to accept recommendation

Susan moved, Avery second, approved

(The RED group will vote next Tuesday)

Workforce Development discussion – “filling the bucket”?

Retention, recruitment, retraining strategies – leading towards next annual **Strategic Priorities**

- SD – this region is a leader in neurodiverse education and could be leader in deploying that workforce.
- MK - Is there an effort to work with employers to be better employers? We found a lot of employers who complained the loudest were plowing through people. **Employer of choice concept and daylighting the cost of turnover, culture work.**
- Drew – we’re in year 3 of **Vermont Best Places to work**. What’s been telling is that the only two companies south of Route 4 represented in that were us and SW Vermont Medical center. It’s not expensive, you get a designation that helps you hire, we improved our benefits package as a result and improved our wellness program.
- Bob – **slow retirement** and strategies around that. (Josh – just hired someone a retired person who is coming on board with major expertise)
- Bob – **infrastructure** to support population growth (talented partner, childcare, housing) – all components of a strategy.
- Bob – what about strategies around recruitment in general?

- Luke – some obvious low hanging fruit. Not so much effort in keeping teens. Focus on bringing people back. **Give up, Come home.** Find those people on FB etc. (Cheryl Morse method).
- Avery – People from other rural areas like me (rural MN). Hipsters that don't like the city. We get lots of people at the brewery from New Jersey and Phila. **We could set up a booth at Union Square, and have welcome home days (used to do this as "Old Home Days").**
- Luke - *Choose lifestyle first and figure the rest out..*
- MK - New England is very attractive to people who have lived in urban areas because of culture.
- KvK – lots of ways to target those audiences
- Can we quantify the reduced costs literally and emotionally of living here...
- Drew – do we believe people can come here and do what they want to do?
- Avery – so MUCH room here for entrepreneurship.
- KvK – and remote workers.
- Target moms who want their kids back!

Switched over to housing discussion.

- Growth will be in regional centers (new units) but if the homes in the outlying towns switch from older residents to younger families, then we have population growth!
- MK – what are the “positive deviants” in solving for some of these things? Examples of innovation and solutions.
- What could an “angel investor” do to create a transformative project?!
 - (can we document those projects that made a difference in a community – Brooks House, Village of Algiers, Williamstown Inn etc)
- What happens when the “logjam” in a community gets unstuck?
- Susan – can we host a film series on some ways to re-envision how communities develop?
- Tiny houses to accommodate target populations
- WRC working with Jamaica and Londonderry on water / sewer

Strategic Priorities

Everyone needs to review these before next time so that we can update them.

Adam reminds us that for these updates we have to focus on what **WE** do, in addition to naming our assets / partners.

Bob – can we have data on our strategies?

- Like how many people a year do we need in the 25-44 age group to come back
- How many people in that age group are from this region (HS Grad #s annually?)

What is sufficient to solve our problem?

And how do we convene conversations with our partners about how we each play a role and fit together in creating solutions.

Motion to adjourn