

SeVEDS Board Notes July 18 2018

Present: Mary Ann Kristiansen, Avery Schwenk, Gary Fox, Bill Colvin, Luke Stafford, Laura Sibia, Sarah Lang, Meg Streeter, Bob Stevens, Josh Druke, Drew Richards, Ashley Havreluk, Jen Stromsten

On the phone: Susan McMahon, Adam Grinold and Stephen Dotson

Minutes Approved

exec cmte

Bill motions to suggest the slate for new Executive Committee, 2nd by Luke:

- Meg Streeter Chair
- Bill Colvin Vice Chair?
- Avery Schwenk Secretary
- Stephen Dotson, Treasurer

Vote, passed unanimously

Meg motions to expand Executive Committee from 4 to 5 2nd by Ashley

Need to create continuity i.e. former chair

Also still 3 openings on the board

Fundraising ltr

Gary motion to approve (Ashley 2nd), approved unanimously

Updates

CEDS Public Input Sessions

Reviewing slides Cooper did for RED committee

Substantive discussion

Housing – need to set a goal.

(identify who needs housing, what kind of housing that is, and where those solutions fit)

- Need for quality apartments for single individuals
- Need for affordable homes for starter families
- Anecdotes about Putnam, and Brooks house, 12 homes medical Ctr bought in Bennington – investing to fix up and help with down payment (Healthy Homes for Bennington), people who have different needs from young professionals to empty nesters concentrated in an area to rehab a neighborhood (and adding critical mass of workforce living downtown) tax sale / estate \$14 – 60k
- What can we do – incentivize upgrades and more of what we want
- Proving the middle market is there

- Social infrastructure and cultural infrastructure especially when it comes to attracting diversity – we can at least start with communicating about it and about how proximate we are to places that offer more services, goods, worship that cater to different communities
- BODs and the opportunity for communities that have BOD capacity. Most of our plants were built for flow, not high BOD> This limits dairy, timber, paper, breweries. We have 4 companies looking to relocate here that are limited by Windham’s ability to service this aspect of growth. Municipalities that create high BOD facility would be at an advantage to attract a company.
- Broadband Windham County has the 3rd highest # of unserved buildings in the state.
- Cell – getting better.
- Public education system – lack of faith becomes self-fulfilling
- WRC is having a workshop for villages on wastewater – redeveloping places like Jamaica will require some solutions
- Limiting factor of intolerance for activities from forestry through manufacturing
- Other statewide assets we can leverage – electrical grid, power sources that are clean to attract companies that care, VT Climate Action cmte coming up w recommendations for dealing w carbon goals and dovetails into Ecovation Ctr
- Infrastructure Brainstorming infrastructure in the last five years: Laura taking notes. Lots on broadband and cell; trains – passenger and freight; fuel tank farms; energy infrastructure?
- Five most important ED projects in the zone in the past 5 yrs? Brooks House....created a pathway to Putnam Block. GS Expansion. Commonwealth. Chroma. Sonnax growth and ESOP and transfer. Hermitage, Mount Snow (great example of construction activity driving local economy). Irene – what it drove in terms of public and private investment and infrastructure improvement.
- Why were they important? Creates some net gain....WW Josh for instance if we didn’t have the years we had with resort building we would not be building in Newfane. Bob – are we relying too much on what is not a “real” economy? How do we reinvest the gains from tourism economy in ways that diversify the economy.
- Five year hiring inventory project! – the CEDS - driving forward capacity of the region and focus; Co-op building in Brattleboro;
- Adding capacity to do big projects.
- Employee ownership as a retention and succession plan. (Bill has 7-8 biz with 30-50 employees locally owned with no plan). That lack of exit strategy makes it hard to attract VC there.
- What economic Development programs were tried in the Zone that did not have adequate results? – What were the causes of inadequate performance? – Broadband - lots of stimulus \$ Sovernet and VTEL. SoVermont marketing etc. Island Project in Bellows Falls. Vermont Yankee – trying to engage with employees but they left, Windham Regional invested in helping the town try to plan. Wilmington / Dover & 1% options tax but no process to evaluate results and not sure if there are any to measure. WCEDP? –

do we feel good about how the VY money has been invested and spent? Has been a differentiator on big projects but there were a couple of blowouts.

- We still need capital infrastructure. Having the \$10M from WCEDP was great but there's more strategy work to do there.
- What other ideas do you have for improving economic development efforts in the Zone?
Bob changes the question – what strategic differentiable assets do we have to leverage?