

VAPDA MINUTES

June 3, 2021

Attendees:

Members: Tasha Wallis, Chris Campany, Ed Bove, Dave Snedecker, Jim Sullivan, Tom Kennedy, Bonnie Waninger, Catherine Dimitruk, Adam Lougee. Associates: Jen Mojo, Amy Bell, Ari Rockland-Miller, Jake Hemmerick, Suzanne Kelley, Chris Cochran, Lee Dorf. Guests: Caitrin Maloney, Nick Bennet, RJ Thompson, Elizabeth Marotta, Breck Knauft, Amie Fleming, Shelby Semmes, Seth Brown, Lucian Chown, Angus McCusker.

1. Velomont Trail. RJ Thompson reviewed the concept and the fund-raising effort. Phase 1 123 miles and 12 huts. Navigable by bike and cross-country skiing. Also connecting to villages and downtowns. Starting with a planning phase. 485 miles of contiguous trail. 12 counties, 27 communities and 23 trail organizations. Up to 84,000 acres of land conserved. Phase 1 cost is \$6.5 million. Other guests reviewed their roles. There was discussion about connections to other trails. For more information contact rj@vermonthuts.org, Shelby.semmes@tpl.org, breck.knauft@vycc.org, Fleming@quantifiedventures.com, caitrin.maloney@gmail.com - Caitrin Maloney with Velomont Trail Collective.
2. Community Development – Adam and DHCD working on Zoning for Great Neighborhoods training to be drafted by the end of June. Not much in the way of changes to the FY22 scope of work. Chris reviewed legislative results. \$650,000 in budget for bylaw modernization to promote housing in centers. Need to know which communities might seriously interested in this by June 14 along with estimated costs. This can take more than one year. \$8 million for water/wastewater in ARPA funding was also approved. \$75,000 for general RPC funding can be spent over up to three years. Downtown funding got an additional \$5 million for funding Better Connections implementation work. EV charging stations got \$1 million focused on multi-family sites. <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/charging-stations/public-charging-map>. Better Places program passed with \$1.5 million with a crowd-sourced fund-raising effort for local match. Vermont Community Foundation is also engaged in this work. This will launch in early 2022. Working Community Challenge \$2 million appropriated. Brownfields got \$11 million with \$1 million for RPCs. Village water and wastewater efforts are under discussion with ANR. Starting to engage in Climate Commission work focusing on smart growth. There is a need for RPCs to meet to discuss Climate Commission recommendations. Cochran suggested that VAPDA think about taking a position on the State Planning Office concept being discussed in the Legislature. Jake brought up an effort to make tax credits work for the NDAs. Final FY21 grant reports are due by July 31 at the latest. FY22 grant agreements – noted the \$75,000 over up to three years. Energy planning proposed to be distributed by formula with some language about what is expected to be accomplished. **RPCs are asked to get suggestions on performance measures and funding to Jim Sullivan by June 11. DHCD looking for feedback by 6/14.** New staffer is joining DHCD with a background in sustainability. RPC assistance to municipalities is funded with \$300,000 over the next two years starting May 1, 2021. Ed is taking lead on this.
3. Natural Resources – Jen reported on ANR ARPA efforts. Building programs to deliver the funds and permit projects. Need third party consultant to review for ARPA compliance. Will take a few months to get all this rolling. This is primarily for wastewater and stormwater efforts at about \$100,000,000. May be tight deadlines for FY23 or FY24. Trail guidance process is underway. CWSP rules are about

to be finalized. **CB to forward email from Neil.** Company discussed the conversation with Fidel at VNRC about forest fragmentation review. Also, expressed in interest in working with ANR to find funding to help RPCs support reducing forest fragmentation. We will discuss this issue at a future meeting. There is still a need to talk with DEC about planning for wastewater. **Tasha to follow-up with DEC staff.**

4. Emergency Management – Lee is re-engaging after working on COVID activities. Lee is asking the VAPDA committee to review admin activities around the EMPG. Catherine added that the committee has reviewed a draft framework for the Act 166 report and that will be shared; it is not a time-consuming task. Lee is verifying whether it is EMPG eligible.
5. Transportation – EV incentives can be explained by Dan Dutcher at a future meeting. Annual request for performance indicators is coming with a deadline of July 15. FY22 TPI program is out. Deadline is August 6. Please review billings between short- and long-term tasks to review if amendments are needed. VPSP2 is moving forward through this pilot year and Amy expressed thanks for everyone’s commitment and patience.
6. Energy – Regional forums with PSD are scheduled and underway. Other info covered under community development.
7. Agriculture – Ari reminded us that farmers’ markets are back. Company asked for feedback if Ari notices any trends in applications to convert farmland.
8. Health – Suzanne noted that COVID demobilization is in process. Jared is applying for a five-year climate and health grant and will be contacting us this summer. They are seeking a letter of support. Charlie moved and Catherine seconded to send the letter. All in favor. CDC health disparities grant for \$28 million to look at rural health and community health workers. It includes some work to look at health equity zones with community partners using a collective impact model. Will also include a state food security plan. State engagement model promoting physical activity will re-start later this year. There was discussion about having a meeting with District Health Directors to re-familiarize them with our work and how we could help. Suzanne will explore this and get back to us.
9. Climate – Company explained that public outreach is underway. Committees are continuing their work. Just transition principles are being drafted. Report is still expected by December 1.
10. Government Affairs – Dave will reach out to DED about the getting brownfield funding flowing. Tom brought up the issue of ARPA county funding going to the side judges and sheriffs. Congressional delegation is working on this and we are supporting the effort. Towns are only getting the municipal share for now. Stay tuned.
11. Minutes and Treasurer’s Report – Catherine moved, Tom seconded, approval. All in favor.
12. Other – Finance staff are all meeting next week.
13. Adjourned at 11:58.