**VOREC Steering Committee Meeting**

March 23, 2018 at The Annex, Montpelier

**Attendees:** Mike Snyder, Wendy Knight, Cindy Locke, Hal Ellms, Mike DeBonis, Tom Stuessy, Amy Kelsey, Dave Furman, Jessica Savage, Craig Whipple, Caroline Zeilenga, Marc Sherman (via phone), Sarah Lang (via phone), Drew Simmons (late), Trey Martin (late), David Mears, Ken Jones, Heather Pelham

**Mike S: Introductions**

**February Meeting Minutes Approved:** Tom motion to approve, Wendy second. Tom moves to pass minutes as amended to include that Tom seconded creation of an outdoor ethic. Minutes aprroved with amendment. None opposed, no abstentions.

**Mike S: Review agenda**

**Vermont Law School Small Business Law Clinic Presentation with David Mears**

Mike S: Introduction of David.

Introduction of committee members to David.

David explanation of Vermont Law School (VLS) small business law clinic. How could VLS be better engaged with outdoor recreation? Model would be to provide legal services to businesses just starting or just scaling up. Services initially proposed in Chittenden County, but eventually statewide.

Questions about VLS program raised and answered.

Mike S: Any request you want us to consider for next steps?

David: General suggestions, and ideas for fundraising and funding sources or organizations that may want to partner with VLS.

**DRAFT Outdoor Rec Economic Impact Study with Ken Jones (ACCD) & Discussion of Outdoor Recreation Economy (National and State)**

Mike S: Introduction of Ken

Ken explanation of economic impact, reasons for and components of economic assessments.

Discussion of importance of quantifying economic impact of outdoor recreation.

Drew: Are there other industries/groups using blends of statistics in their ask for investment?

Ken: Tourism sector demonstrates how tourism money leads to other higher-quality services. Outdoor recreation sector is similar: connects to transportation, hospitality, working lands, etc.

Discussion of metrics to measure value of outdoor recreation, and of role of ski areas on larger outdoor recreation industry conversation.

Decision to provide further information to Ken, and also to the national outdoor recreation impact study.

**Legislative Update: Mike & Wendy**

S.276 bill: Passed Senate, outdoor recreation friendly community program included, with language that VOREC would be part of planning and implementing it with FPR and ACCD, and pending Senate Appropriations support of appropriation.

Trails exemption from Act 250: Trails exemption section removed from Senate version of bill, but provision being added to H.904 bill, in committee and may need VOREC support.

Community pilot program language is in ACCD budget and committees are showing interest in this project.

Think Vermont Innovation Fund: Passed out of committee, includes seed funding for business startups, which can include outdoor recreation businesses.

**Update on Think Vermont and Map with Heather Pelham (ACCD)**

Wendy: Introduction of Heather Pelham

Heather explanation and walk-through of ThinkVT website: interactive community atlas asset map with data layers.

Wendy: Tool is intended for people who want to move here; does not replicate other existing tools like Trail Finder or TrailHUB. Tourism and outdoor recreation sectors will be separated out into individual layers.

**Update on Outdoor Business Alliance**

Mike S. asks for OBA update from Drew.

Drew: Goal of OBA is to help OBA members become better businesses. Important to remember the distinction between outdoor recreation industry and outdoor recreation economy—economy includes indirect links as well. Advocacy: in process of growing and polling membership to understand what priorities are most important for alliance to support. There will be many opportunities for the administration and VOREC to support the OBA.

Wendy: ACCD is focused on economic development initiatives, can help provide business support and assist with funding. Important for OBA to connect with ACCD.

Discussion of VOREC as conduit to what businesses need, environmental ethic as part of Vermont OBA, building alliance and bringing in new voices.

**Action Plan: Priorities, Resources and Timelines**

Jessica reviews action plan, seeks input on priority list. Agreement that pilot program is major priority.

Discussion of VHCB rural economic development program, leveraging rather than replicating other projects, priority lists within specific pillars.

Mike S: Suggesting that revisiting action plan is a recurring item in our meetings.

Mike D: Requesting time in a future meeting to focus on funding for stewardship.

Jessica: In a future meeting, we can focus just on funding-related items.

Discussion of locating additional resources to help members understand funding sources better. Decision to postpone this conversation until a future meeting.

**NORC Schedule & VOREC Attendance**

Jessica reviews NORC conference agenda and plan.

**Public Comment**

Kelly Ault: Announcement of Bicycle Express grand opening Friday, March 30. Ribbon cutting with Governor, Commissioner Snyder, WATA members, and others.

**New Business**

Mike S: Second outdoor recreation Confluence convening in July in North Carolina.

Tom: VOICe has a new charter. Please review and schedule a short Q & A at the next meeting.

Drew: Added VOREC membership to LinkedIn profile. Created a lot of engagement and promoted the initiative.

Jessica: VOREC is being asked to present at upcoming fall conferences. Would like to revitalize communications work group to create a singular presentation that members can use.

Mike S: Other new business?

No other business, meeting adjourned.