**VOREC Steering Committee Meeting**

June 18, 2018 at the Gateway Center, Newport, VT

**Attendees:** Drew Simmons, Bill Supple, Cindy Locke, Jeanne Gervais, Mike Snyder, Hal Ellms, Trey Martin, Josh Ryan, Amy Kelsey (phone), Craig Whipple, Jessica Savage, Caroline Zeilenga, Karen Geraghty (Northeastern Vermont Development Association), Laura Dolgin (Newport City Manager), Jessica Booth (Newport Recreation Department Director), Jim Nagle (Newport Harbormaster), Louise Whipple (Memphremagog Ski Touring Foundation), Robin Smith (Orleans/Caledonia County Record), Tracy Zschau (Vermont Land Trust)

**Mike S: Welcome, Introductions**

**Chair Update**

Mike S: Governor’s signing ceremony for S.276 next week. No legislative changes or updates. Confluence update: Drafting committees have submitted their work, documents will be moved forward at next month’s summit, where Vermont delegation will attend remotely, and then will be ratified in a signing ceremony at Outdoor Retailer.

**Member Updates**

Drew: Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance Update: VOBA continuing to move forward, determining structure and discussing pace of growth given members’ capacities.

Mike S: Any barriers or assistance needed?

Drew: Not at this time. Setting up solid foundation before beginning next steps.

Cindy: Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Update: VTGC evaluating mission, website, how to bring new life to council, including how to be more helpful in the State House with developing trails. Plans to build a trail development guide. Also plans to build an ATV trail.

Mike D: Green Mountain Club work for the season has kicked off. New maps coming out this year, and GMC creating more content/resources.

Hal: Working with Trust for Public Land on Hunger Mountain Headwaters project on Worcester Range, with funding from the Forest Legacy Program.

Trey: Hunger Mountain Headwaters event with Senator Leahy scheduled for this Friday. Also working on an ROI project with Trust for Public Land.

Josh: Building an accessible boardwalk in Monkton and would love to give a tour of this site. Hired 3 more people, bringing total crew to 8. Also, learned a lot on today’s tour. As we push large-scale projects in municipalities, is there a way to combine multiple grants into one project to attain higher funding.

Mike S: Asks Craig for update on Governor’s recent press conference on Great Outdoors Month.

Craig: Press conference was last week. Took the opportunity to mention the VOREC recommendation of the camping gear loaner program.

**Outdoor Recreation Friendly Communities Program Update**

Jessica: Moving ahead with planning team that includes Jessica, Bill, Hal, Craig, Becca Washburn, and ACCD staff. Group is growing; timeline is tight. Need to report to legislature on progress in January. Plan is to take applications in the fall and select a community by end of year, and can include that in the report.

Mike S: Other updates? (None)

**Newport and Outdoor Recreation Economic Development Initiatives**

Karen: History of the city: working landscape, industry, rail, logging. Industry has meant waterfront is less utilized by town.

Tracy: Background on Scott Farm and Vermont Land Trust purchase of property. Working land, cultural asset, historical significance. Public visioning sessions on benefits of the farm to the community. Trail project connecting land to Prouty Beach and Beebe Spur Rail Trail, fundraising ongoing.

Laura & Jessica B: Update on Newport Centennial Celebration. Update on work to link downtown more closely to waterfront, and downtown businesses to recreational activity markets.

James: Background on role of harbormaster and seasonal/transient use of slips in harbor, work to link marina to downtown activity, and potential federal funding for boating infrastructure grant.

Drew: Can you explain how the structure is set up?

James: Current structure of city dock would need to grow with the project to include a rental manager and maintenance staff.

Karen: Still developing capacity, need early wins for larger infrastructure projects.

**Discussion and Q&A**

Mike S: We’re here to hear about your work and how we can help, but also to hear what parts of your work we can bring to other communities. What did it take for people to support conservation?

Karen: Working with the community so no one feels left out, offering information on what recreational assets can provide for a community, connecting different segments of our population.

Laura: Also messaging economic opportunities.

Karen: Need substantial funding to leverage one opportunity into the next.

Louise: Need more singletrack and trail riding here. With more finances and people helping, would love to see a bike event here.

Karen: Need marketing assistance—strategic marketing, or link to regional/state marketing. We have markets here waiting to be tapped.

Discussion of who is measuring results, and how, and interest in finding ways to assign growth to recreational investments to increase buy-in.

Discussion of what VOREC can offer to Newport and VOREC’s role following this meeting: growing assets, designing Outdoor Recreation Friendly Communities Program, locating available resources and facilitating connections.

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**New Business**

Drew: Valley Moves program in Waitsfield has a signage program with trailside kiosks. Suggesting this group come speak to steering committee about this program.

No other new business, meeting adjourned.