Community Development Committee
Minutes from meeting: 11 September 2014
Location: WRC Conference Room

Committee present: Greg Brown, Laura Sibilia, Edie Mas, Gretchen Haverluk, Alice Maes, Jane Morano Purdy, Jenepher Burnell and Rod Francis
Staff present: Susan McMahon
Guests: Darah Kehnemuyi

Called to order 4:35 pm

1. Introductions/Minutes Approval
   Greg Brown chaired the meeting due to the absence of Norm Wright. The minutes of the 14th of August 2014 were approved.

2. Tools to Address Local Housing Needs
   Susan McMahon gave a presentation on non-regulatory and regulatory techniques to help with local housing needs. This presentation was developed by Maura Collins, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, for Vermont regional planning commissions to present to their member communities. The Committee discussed the various techniques and Rod Francis discussed these tools as it related to the Town of Brattleboro. Greg Brown suggested that it may be possible that WRC could use some of the techniques to promote housing on a regional level. Laura Sibilia suggested that a Regional Housing Needs Assessment be submitted as a Windham Region CEDs project. L. Sibilia discussed that housing is an important part of the Livable Communities strategy that needs to be further developed from the CEDs. Jane Morano Purdy discussed that a needs assessment should also look at support services needed to “age in place.”

3. Future Projects for the Community Development Committee
   S. McMahon handed out the following list of projects that was previously discussed by the Committee. Noted in italics is the response by the Committee.
   - Agriculture – Identification of needs to make Windham Region agricultural economy stronger. The thought was to bring together all agricultural interests and through a facilitated discussing determine if there is infrastructure or other unmet needs to enhance the agricultural economy. Natural Resources Committee would like to take the lead on this item. (The Committee agreed that based on all the other items that they were working on that it made sense for the Natural Resource Committee to take the lead on this important issue.)
   - Windham Region Forest Workgroup – This group is already meeting and working on approaches to enhance the forest economy. Staff will continue to work with this
committee. *(The Committee agreed to continue to have this issue as a separate committee and asked staff to post the meetings dates on future Community Development Committee agendas. It was also agreed that other community development related meetings be noted on the agenda as well.)*

- Village and Downtown Revitalization – This project is to continue the work of the closed out EDA grant. The project was successful, but more communities would like the assistance of WRC staff. In addition, communities that have worked with WRC staff would like continued coaching on revitalization and implementation strategies. *(The Committee agreed that this is an important task to continue and would like to assist staff with village and downtown revitalization when possible. S. McMahon said she would notify Committee members of upcoming opportunities to assist with this task.)*

- Housing – Is an important issue to identify needs for housing throughout the Region. No one else is looking at this issue beyond affordable housing. A Housing Needs Assessment might help identify some of the gaps in housing throughout the region. Another possible project is to work with local housing commissions on housing. *(The Committee discussed that it is important to work on this issue and directed staff to work on obtaining funding for a Regional Housing Needs Assessment. The Committee suggested that the Realtor Association and Marlboro College might be good partners for this study.)*

- Other? *(Jane Morano added infrastructure, especially water and wastewater, to the list.)*

4. **Meeting with Natural Resource Committee to discuss Agriculture**
   The Committee approved that the next meeting would be a joint meeting with the Natural Resource Committee to discuss Agriculture on October 8th @ 3:30 p.m. The Community Development Committee will continue with its other business at 4:30p.m

5. **Update and Announcements in Topic Areas**
   - Brownfields
   - **Housing** – S. McMahon discussed that she assisted with facilitating a meeting on the future of the Melrose property.
   - Cultural and Historic
   - **Infrastructure** – September 23rd Vermont Connected: Envisioning the Future of Vermont’s Digital Economy
   - Recreation
   - Economic/Community Development
   - Education
   - Human Services

6. **Other Business/Next Meeting**
   Next meeting scheduled for October 8th @ 3:30 pm with the following topic areas:
   - Agriculture

   Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.