

**Better Middlebury Partnership, September 7, 2018 Board meeting
Held at Middlebury Town Offices, 8:00am**

Attendees: Karen Duguay, Megg Del Giacco, Wendy Hirdler, Chris Hammond, Jim Gish, Russ Marsan, Farhad Khan, Rob Carter, Nancie Dunn, Amey Ryan, Dave Hohenshau,

BMP BOARD MEETING AGENDA:

Lead	Agenda Item
Chris/Christy	Admin/Minutes (Vote)
Karen	Downtown/Econ Health
Karen	Summer Events Wrap-Up
Karen	WinterFest (Discussion)
Nancie	Spooktacular Update
Karen	Very Merry Middlebury (Discussion)
Karen	Neighbors Together/Gov Visit (Discussion)
Jim Bridge	Project Update (Discussion)
Chris	Finance
All	Misc. Discussion

Minutes:

8:00am

Chris presented the need to approve the minutes from last month. Nancie made a motion and it was seconded by Wendy. There was no discussion and all approved the motion.

8:05am

Jim Gish provided the group with a bridge project update. The work is continuing and is on schedule to date. There is one more blast left to complete. Jim mentioned the recent overview in the Addison Independent and some potential ideas of transforming the waterfront with foot paths and benches. He also mentioned the upcoming meeting with the Governor on 9/11 in Middlebury. Jim thinks that the Governor coming to town is a positive thing and that Middlebury and Neighbors together is looking forward to engaging him on additional community support ideas such as the 2020 tax free holidays.

8:10

Karen continued the discussion on Governor's visit and the Neighbors Together work. The Governor and his delegation will visit the tour site and then meet with Neighbors Together at 945 in the basement of St. Stephen's church. Karen will present the work that has been done to date and the money spent on supporting the Middlebury community. The goal is to demonstrate what has been done so far and how additional support will be needed. She

then provided status on the website. All USDA funds were used by the deadline of 8/31 and all invoices were right on budget and per the town they were all paid on time. The website is going to launch soon, possibly the week of 9/10. One outstanding issue with the website is the maintenance costs and whether or not the USDA funds can be applied for 2 years of maintenance. The town is looking into this issue. Karen then discussed three upcoming meetings that Neighbors Together will host for town businesses about getting the Midd Money Match program set up. It has been challenging getting everyone on the same page with the cards, stickers and how it will all work. Karen is not sure of the end date for Midd Money Match, perhaps in December. Amey stated that it is a good idea to get all the town businesses together during the three meetings, which are scheduled for 7pm 9/11 at the town gym, 8:30am 9/14 at the library, and noon on 9/20 at Vermont Coffee.

8:20am

Karen and Farhad then discussed the new Downtown Economic Health Task Force that they are participating in. The objective of this group is to look at ways to improve the local economy and make Middlebury more business friendly. Karen has been hearing some panic from the merchants, but she hopes that everyone will eventually see this time as an opportunity to reimagine our downtown. Dave Donahue had sent Karen an article from the New York Times that says that Madison Ave is also having problems with empty storefronts, so this is a national problem. Karen is interested in attending a March conference in Seattle about downtown communities. Karen wants to do research and see what other communities are doing. Maybe retail is not the glue that holds things together. Amey wants the community to be "poised to take advantage of new things in Middlebury." Dave H. talked about the Downtown Master Plan with Jen Murray and how that is involved. Megg mentioned that there are so many different groups involved in Middlebury, how do we capture things across the groups. Amey talked about the value of having another Midd Summit and maybe doing it annually or even quarterly. This would be something that the BMP could set up again, perhaps in this January.

8:30am

Karen did a summary of the Midd Summer Movie and Music event series. The only remaining things might be to show the Greatest Showman, which was rained out earlier, possibly on Friday 9/14. We want to try to advertise this at the college. The other rained out movie, Wimpy Kid, might be shown by Dustin in the Rec Dept. Karen and Chris talked about how the second Marble Works concert went very well and was a low cost easy event that might be a fixture in future summers.

8:35am

Nancie gave an update on Spooktacular, which is scheduled from 1-3pm on Sunday 10/28. Things are moving along and Nancie has received some sponsorship funds. She also

received a commitment of single serve cheese packages from Cabot. Nancie might need a few things as she gets closer such as cornstalks and hay bales as well as the different lawn games. She will reach out via Front Porch Forum to find people and things.

8:40am

The group had a large discussion about Winterfest. Russ provided everyone with brochures from the 2018 Rutland Winterfest and walked through each activity and sponsor. He stated that the Rutland Recreation Department is a huge partner that they rely on and that they have also had success finding other groups and business to take on each of the events throughout the weeklong festival. Chris mentioned that this is the model we want to follow for the Middlebury Winterfest. The team brainstormed some potential ideas and Dave H. said he would talk with Stonecutters about a possible lantern parade and bonfire one of the nights. The timing of the Middlebury Winterfest would be Saturday, February 16th through Wed/Thurs the 20/21st. The Middlebury College Winter Carnival is the following weekend (2/23 and 2/24) and we want to have our events done before theirs start. Russ confirmed that his support for Rutland Winterfest is the weekend after the Middlebury Winterfest so he should be able to be involved in both. Chris mentioned the need to get the college involved to see if there are any activities they want to run. Karen stated that she would be sending out a message to form the Winterfest Committee soon.

8:50am

Karen provided an update on the Very Merry Middlebury and the need to form a committee and recruit some reliable people to volunteer. Karen will send out a list of what is needed. There will be two Midd Night Stroll events, on December 6 and 13. The work for Very Merry needs to start very soon.

9:00am

Chris provided a brief update of the finance/fundraising effort and will be working with the Executive Committee. The goal will be to present to some sponsors by the end of September. Karen asked anyone if there was a volunteer for a new Secretary since Christy might be stepping down.

9:05am

Meeting adjourned.