

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
Public Health & Safety Committee
Middlebury Police Dept Community Room
Monday, Sept 17, 2018* Draft Meeting Minutes

Attending the meeting: Committee members Selectboard Member Laura Asermily, Addison County Sheriff Don Keeler, Health Officer Tom Scanlon, MUHS student Kyle Mitchell, Ira Schiffer, Police Chief Thomas Hanley (arriving 4:45 pm). Guests: Peg Goldman, Rail Bridge Community Liaison Jim Gish Absent: Fire Chief Dave Shaw, Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Porter Hospital EM Dir Mike Leyden, Gary Baker, MREMS Dir Teena Betourney Middlebury College Public Safety Dir Lisa Burchard.

Call to Order. Chair Laura Asermily called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Approval of Agenda. Laura noted that with several committee members absent, they didn't have quorum to make motions so perhaps could have an informal discussion of agenda items and agree on next meeting time of Oct 15.

Approval of July 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes: Chief Hanley arrived at 4:45 pm, delayed with traffic from an important interview out of town for a potential police officer hire that he didn't want to interrupt. This allowed the committee to approve minutes. Tom Scanlon moved approval and Ira Schiffer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Cell Tower (Chipman Hill): Don Keeler reported that MREMS was experiencing radio interference from the second tower not being removed and felt the Town needed to apply pressure on Verizon to get it down by pursuing Verizon's permit violation. He and Chief Hanley worked on improving the security of the building in which their equipment is stored by installing a lock and security camera. Don noted that moisture was entering this building and needed to be addressed so it didn't compromise the electronics in it. The committee agreed to pursue clarity around who owns the building and would be responsible for fixing this. Security around the cell tower grounds remains an issue, exposing the town to liability if someone attempts to climb or damage the tower or buildings.

Emergency Planning: Ciderfest debriefing hadn't happened yet, which might partly explain PHS Committee low attendance this month, as well as fact that the committee hadn't met since July so fell off people's radar. Will occur next week. Can report highlights and follow up further at next PHS meeting. In other matters, Tom Scanlon reported that he was successful in securing a \$2,500 grant for Addison County Regional Emergency Planning to conduct another table top exercise in another town, possibly Vergennes.

Downtown Public Safety: Jim Gish reported that the blastings went smoothly, no damage to surrounding buildings which were being carefully warned and monitored. Worked with Fire Chief Shaw on Battel Block access. Resolved that new aerial new aerial truck could access it from the new Battel Block access road along Otter Creek from Water St with an appropriate fire lane in Battel Block parking lot. No parking issues, there is plenty on upper Merchants Row. Parking signage is being improved and enforcement continues. Poor visibility and speeding down upper Main St as drivers turn right from North Pleasant remains an issue, contributing to accidents. So does conflict in the ACTR bus stop at Post Office where drivers occupy it as well as handicapped parking for quick runs into post office.

Safety Day: Laura noted that this could be an opportunity to elevate importance of pursuing a career in protective services, especially given the current challenges of staffing and recruiting

volunteers for MPD, MFD and MREMS. It would also provide practical advice on safety measures. She saw it building on the model of what Mary Hogan School did last May 2017 and bringing it to the high school or career center. Perhaps it could be coupled with or complimented by local protective service speakers at an assembly or in classes to tell students what it is like, a typical day. The committee discussed the need to revive the Cadet Program led by Scot Fischer for many years but dormant now. Tom Scanlon shared that the American Legion hosts the Addison County Law Enforcement Police Academy Program which pays the fee for students to attend the Police Academy the weekend of Father's Day. Applications are due Nov/Dec. MUHS student Kyle Mitchell agreed to pursue these ideas with Activity Director Sean Farrell and Prevention Coordinator Brooke Jette. Tom Scanlon hoped for the opportunity to combine this with outreach on suicide prevention, noting that he had material to share with families.

Halloween: Kyle reported that the MUHS Student Council on which he now serves is planning a "Trunk and Treat" activity on Halloween which falls on a Wednesday this year. This is a safe and fun way for kids to treat or treat. Tom Scanlon reported that he had Halloween Safety outreach materials he hoped to distribute to schools for families. Laura reported that Spooktacular will occur the Sunday afternoon before Halloween on Town Green as in years past and is an opportunity to do safety outreach. She also noted that Middlebury Safe Routes highlight the need for good visibility when walking and biking by giving away reflectors for its October Walk & Roll to School Day.

Marbleworks Traffic Calming: Tom Scanlon reported that someone tripped on the speedbumps outside of the condos and wondered if the committee wanted to weigh in on addressing this traffic calming measure.

Homelessness: Tom Hanley urged the committee to discuss this at their next meeting. There is a need for clarity and problem solving on the issue of individuals who are threatening and misusing public spaces like the gazebo, its facing downtown buildings, especially the Baptist Church, Ilsley Library, Town Office entrance areas and restrooms, the Marbleworks, under the Cross St bridge, and Middlebury College buildings. Ready access to food and wifi services and electric attract people from out of Middlebury and the state "living the good life"—not truly homeless—but choosing a transient lifestyle. There are increased nuisance reports—noise, public drinking, fouling spaces—that are taxing MPD's limited staff. Charter House is trying to do the right thing and the truly homeless people staying there are not the problem. Laura agreed to invite Charter House and CSAC reps to next meeting to brainstorm on this.

Next Meeting. Monday, Oct 15, 2018, 4 pm at MPD, to debrief on homeless and transient individuals safe and appropriate use of public spaces.

Adjourn. At 5 pm, Tom Scanlon moved that the Committee adjourn. Tom Hanley seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Respectfully Submitted, Laura Asermily, Public Health & Safety Committee Chair