

# **Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative Meeting Notes - 11/14/16**

## **Attending**

The 10 attendees represented 8 of our 13 organizations. They were:

- Cheri Arzt - Vernon Education Foundation
- Ginny Gingras - Friends of Valley Falls, Tolland County Agricultural Center
- Ann Letendre - Friends of Hockanum River Linear Park
- Jean Luddy - Vernon Historical Society
- Jean Merz - Vernon Garden Club
- Nancy Strong - Strong Family Farm
- Cindy Trenholm - The Vernon Chorale

Also participating were:

Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen Valley website  
Joseph Macary - Superintendent of Schools  
Carol Barcomb - Friends of Rockville Public Library

## **Organization**

- In 2017 we'll again have four meetings on second Mondays: March 13, May 8, September 11 and November 13. The third meeting was moved from August to September.
- We added a 5<sup>th</sup> date of July 10 for a special program, perhaps at another location.
- Possible speakers include new Vernon Representative Mike Winkler, Drew Crandall of the Rockville Downtown Asso. or Community Voice Channel representatives.
- Jean Luddy has joined our Steering Committee which met last week on November 10.

## **Superintendent Joe Macary**

Superintendent Macary joined us as we reviewed recent projects and plans for 2017. The organizations discussed areas where they are working with students and schools:

- **Friends of HRLP** can use student volunteers when they install the Suspended Bridge over the Hockanum River in the Spring.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** has opportunities for student docents when the farm is open to visitors in the summer.
- **Strong Family Farm's** next opportunity for student volunteers is likely the spring cleanup day in April. Nancy is on the VoAg Board so there are many ways students can help at the farm.

- **The Vernon Chorale** discussed a plan for selecting a High School Fellow.
- **Tolland County Agricultural Center** hosts many 4-H activities and with the new Gunther Farm can use volunteer help developing that property. They also give two scholarships.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** gives grants to teachers each year and encourages more to submit proposals.
- **Vernon Garden Club** gives a grant each year and works with Lake Street students on their butterfly garden. They would like to reach other schools with garden projects.
- **Vernon Historical Society's** Jean Luddy is working with the Curriculum Committee on updating "Vernon, Our Town" for third grade students.

Mr. Macary invited us to participate in a new email newsletter program sent to every student's family. Send him a pdf flyer for upcoming events and he'll see that its included with the mailing. This is an opportunity for us to reach more families with programs at no cost to you.

### **Other Organization Updates & News**

- **Friends of HRLP** has a \$175,000 grant and is working with VGV on a Suspended Bridge over the Hockanum River north of Route 74 connecting the Dart Hill North Trail to Ellington's part of the Hockanum River Trail. Work has been delayed until Spring.
- **Friends of Rockville Public Library** has many fall events including a cookie sale, tag sale and games.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** is working with Bob Hurd on changes to the Stable to accommodate visitors to their planned Heritage Center.
- **Strong Family Farm** had a very successful Fall Harvest Festival. Many exhibitors and a good opportunity for our organizations to reach the public. 2017 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the barn.
- **The Vernon Chorale's** first concert is December 10 at St. John's Episcopal Church.
- **Tolland County Agricultural Center** is making good progress on the acquisition of the Gunther Farm.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** gave mini grants to teachers.
- **Vernon Garden Club's** 2016-2017 season is underway with monthly programs.
- **Vernon Historical Society** held its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in October. They are finalizing program plans for 2017.

### **Vernon Events Magazine**

- The four articles for the Winter issue of *Vernon Events* are posted on our website for participants. The articles are: Awards & Scholarships, Small Triumphs, Big Things Coming and Support Your Local Nonprofit.
- 2017 articles - Articles for 2016 included activities of multiple organizations. For next year we'll do articles from each organization spotlighting one project or accomplishment. I'll run this by the Mayor.

- Spring issue articles - Covers late March, April, May and early June. Articles due February 1.
  - Spring Events
  - VHS 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration
  - Room for two more.
- Please continue to send news items to post on non event subjects such as Scholarships, Grants and Student Projects.

### **Town News**

- It was noted that many members of the Town Council don't belong to or participate in our organizations.

### **Our Challenges**

#### **Coordinating Schedules**

- Our Event Schedule page is updated regularly and our MeetUp Page is growing with 175 members. Check the web page when scheduling to avoid conflicts and let me know of your dates for posting.

#### **Recruiting Volunteers**

- Manchester recently had a fair to encourage volunteering; 25 organizations participated. Consider doing something in the New Year around a one-day Winter Farmers' Market. If we wait until Spring might use the TCAC exhibition building.

#### **Working With The Town**

- Would like to meet with the Mayor early next year. Rather than just introduce ourselves we could respond to a preselected question such as: How could the town support your organization (other than more money)? Ideas for improving Vernon's image? Vernon Photo Campaign?

#### **Organizational Support and Promotion of VVC**

- Discussed creating a Welcome Packet for Realtors and Apartments. We could also use it for fairs and other events. Might invite Eric Santini, Jr as a guest.
- Still like to do a single brochure introducing all the organizations for fairs.
- The Greater Vernon Holistic Healthfest is March 25 & 26 at VCMS. Some of our outdoor groups have been taking part. Michelle Hill from the Vernon Youth Services Bureau is the organizer.
- In October I attended a CT League of Historical Organizations Marketing Program. Not too much new but they encouraged adding a Twitter account to reach younger people. I'm considering this and have also started a Blog, mostly for the Tankerhoosen, but will include VVC activities where possible.

### **Raising Money**

- Nancy suggested a grant workshop one night in February at RPL.

### **Developing Boards**

- Might use our July meeting to bring in a speaker. Perhaps get a small grant and hold at RPL. Nancy's Quinn Urich might do a Strategic Planning workshop.

### **Next**

- Our next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, March 13** at 9 a.m. at Mitchell's Restaurant.

Jon Roe

11/27/16