

Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative Meeting Notes - 11/12/18

Our meeting was held with the Vernon Community Network at the Bev's Corner in Rockville.

Attending

The 8 member attendees representing 10 of our 13 organizations were:

- Cheryl Arzt - Vernon Education Foundation
- Don Bellingham - Vernon Greenways Volunteers
- Ginny Gingras - Vernon Garden Club & Tolland County Agricultural Center
- Ann Letendre - Friends of Valley Falls & Friends of HRLP
- Jean Luddy - Vernon Historical Society
- Nancy Strong - Strong Family Farm
- Cindy Trenholm - The Vernon Chorale
- Phyllis Winkler - Arts Center East

Also participating:

- Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen
- Teri Rogers - Vernon Community Network
- Amy Blank - Vernon Community Network
- Mike Winkler - State Representative from Vernon

VVC Updates - This recaps activity since our last quarterly meeting in September held at the Vernon Senior Center:

- **Senior Center Follow Up** - There has been no followup from Maureen Gabrielle as a result of our meeting with her.
- **September 15 - Public Works Community Day** - VVC had a tent passing out literature and a list of upcoming fall events. Strong Family Farm and Maureen Gabrielle were also exhibiting. I didn't find it too useful as only families came by our area and the kids were on their way to fire trucks or ice cream.
- **October 11 - Liability Insurance Meeting** - Met with VCN, RDA, RCA and Jeff Boultrice, who provides insurance for many town events. As VVC is not incorporated we can't create an umbrella policy. You'll have to contact Jeff individually if interested in learning more.
- **October 20 - Strong Family Farm Autumn Harvest Festival** - I had a tent for The Tankerhoosen and promoted Question #2 approval. CVC, VHS and NECWM also exhibited.

- **October 20 - Vernon Seniorhood Fair** - This was unfortunately the same day and time as Strong's Harvest Festival; a reason for a combined town calendar. NCLT had a table.
- **October 25 - CT Trails Symposium** - I attended and learned how trails connect people to build community and town economy.
- **November 1 - CVC Open House** - Nancy Strong and I attended as they have new 4k cameras they were integrating into their studio.
- **November 8 - Vernon Communications Committee** - As a result of Hartford Foundation meetings Vernon, under Town Administrator Mike Purcaro, will review and recreate our communication systems - internal and external, print and online. I am part of the team representing VVC.

We hired one of Hartford Foundation's recommended consultants to help us identify needs and write grants to fund the redesign. At this meeting our committee met with the Consultants to discuss expectations and next steps. They will solicit input at events and in focus groups. We want to be sure VVC members have a voice. Not sure if we'll have a separate focus group.

- **November 13 - Rockville High School Volunteer's Day** - Some of our groups again took advantage of this event to reach students and sign up volunteers. Taking part were Strong Family Farm, Vernon Historical Society and Arts Center East. If you couldn't make it, but would like to reach students you can send details for their list of opportunities to Allison Altieri.

Organization Updates & News

- **Arts Center East** was represented by Phyllis Winkler. Many activities taking place and planned for 2019 including plays, poetry and music.
- **Friends of HRLP's** Pleasantview Drive boardwalk official opening will wait until Spring.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** are working on their Heritage Center to open in 2019.
- **New England Civil War Museum** created and performed an evening at Town Hall on the lives of Civil War soldiers. CVC is planning to record it for viewing.
- **Northern CT Land Trust** held their annual fall hikes in Vernon at Talcott Ravine and Webster Preserve. They have a grant to build a short bridge at Talcott Ravine to better view the falls.
- **Strong Family Farm** held their Harvest Festival. They have a matching grant for the next year of \$100,000. Nice article in the JI on Nancy. They recently held a facilitated Board Meeting to make long range plans and set priorities.

- **The Vernon Chorale's** first concert of the season is Dec. 8 at St. Bernard's Church in Rockville.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** has new leadership with Laurie Bajorek as president and Pam Reynolds as VP.
- **Vernon Garden Club's** 2018-19 3rd Monday programs are underway.
- **Vernon Greenways Volunteers** had their annual wrap up meeting last month.
- **Vernon Historical Society** - The third edition of 'Vernon, Our Town' is being distributed. It is available at the museum for \$18. The January program will be on the book. The first floor furnace died and is being replaced.

Town News

- **Our New Home** for meetings might be the town owned **Citizen's Block**, which is being renovated. Space will be rented to businesses but, per the Mayor, there will also be a community room on the first floor where groups such as ours can hold meetings.
- **Old Senior Center** - Some town offices will move into the first floor and we had a discussion about making the top floor available for events.
- **Vernon Events** will be replaced with a new publication and printer. Work will begin in January.
- **Winterfest** will be held on **Friday, December 7** with a fire truck parade and Santa's arrival.
- **Rockville Public Library** - As part of the integration with the town most of the senior staff has retired or not been rehired. The library's new director is Jennifer Johnson.
- **Lion's Club** - Recently reactivated - we might want to connect with them.
- **Population Shift** - Forty percent of our population are rentals. Over the next few years another 1,000 apartments are coming to town. How do we engage this population?

Working With the Vernon Community Network

- As we began today Teri and Amy gave us background on VCN, their Mission and activities. We introduced ourselves and talked about our organizations while looking for areas we could support each other.
- Mission: VCN identifies and coordinates resources for the enrichment of our community.

- Teri and Amy are both on the Vernon Communications Committee with me, so one common interest is improving town communications.
- Teri is also on the board of CVC and encouraged us to make use of their facilities. Let them know of programs you might want to tape and, if possible, they will provide an intern.
- Teri has also been advocating for a Visitor Welcome Center at the empty building next to Vernon Garden Club's Lafayette Square garden. It could serve multiple purposes. For VVC organizations it would provide information to visitors on our trails, events, and places to visit such as Valley Falls Park & Farm, Strong Family Farm, New England Civil War Museum and Arts Center East.
- Teri would like to have us come to one of VCN's regular meetings to share with members who we are and what we do.
- Bev's Corner, recently renamed Oasis, is available for meetings and programs. It is configured to be flexible.

Next

- Our 2019 schedule will be similar to this year with meetings on the second Monday of March, May, September and November and perhaps a special event and picnic in July.
- Our next quarterly meeting then is on **Monday, March 11**. Location to be determined.

Jon Roe
11/19/18