

Community Engagement Working Group Meeting

September 29, 2021 Notes

Attending (9): Michelle Hill, Jon Roe, Robin Kohler, Cynthia Zingler, Joe Macary, Osterday, Matt Hellman, Teri Rogers & Tom Didio.

Admin (2): Dave Owens, Bill Meier

Place: Town Council Room 3rd Floor at 3 p.m. 1 hour meeting.

Purpose: To get an update on communications and discuss future plans.

- The Hartford Foundation grant expires June 30, 2022. They are very happy with what we have accomplished during Covid. We will probably get extension. Macary thinks its important to keep the Working Group together as is and not expand.
- Meier stressed the importance of engagement between our groups and with other towns and how Covid has helped. Partnerships were formed. How can we build on them?
- Macary praised the shared services between schools, admin and community. Need to continue and expand.
- Want to find how to collect data to measure our success. How do it other than Facebook members and hits?
- Bill reviewed how we responded to Covid and the good publicity we got. Eight towns in the phone bank. We focused on reaching vulnerable populations. Dave Owens big help.

Media

- Calendar - all entries go to Dave for review first.
- Suggested color coded calendar events.
- They have new Calendar Policy.
- Dave will get 2022 Vernon Voice schedule from Diane.
- JI wants video for their website.
- I suggested links to CVC for our YouTube channel.
- Dave referenced the Everbridge Emergency system as a potential push system.
- I gave Dave surveys from VVC meeting.

Website

- The website developer is 'Finalsite' same as the school.
- Dave does 6-12 updates a day. Still lots to do on the website.

Publicity

- Talked about how to get town good publicity. I urged publishing hard copy brochures. Also talked doing Rein's place mats.
- Good relation with press. Vernon is often first call from reporters for comments.'
- Vernon could use a short promotional video.

What's Next

- From Macary: 1 - ID all town groups and churches. 2- Every group should help with promoting events; 3- Write and send life articles regularly.
 - I will send Dave our list of 14 when he defines what he wants.
 - I mentioned our MeetUp etc for promotion
 - Suggested using our Vernon Voice articles for Life Articles.

● **I Presented These Issues:** From VVC Meeting.

1- Some orgs (Strong Farm, ACE) have been having a problem with navigating town regulations, particularly on fund raisers. Shaun Gately provides one stop help to businesses. Can someone on staff, maybe Gately, provide guidance for our nonprofits?

2- For many outside town our trails are our best known feature, best public relations and positive selling point. The Rail Trail is 20 years old and showing wear. This summers rains have continuously washed out sections of trail that the Vernon Greenways Volunteers with support from Park & Rec have filled in with stone dust. This is no longer adequate and a more permanent solution is needed.

3- We receive good publicity on our trails and for our Covid efforts this year, but we have no planned and funded effort for promoting Vernon to our neighbors and for tourism. What little is done is self funded by residents or nonprofit organizations. Vernon should have a line item in its budget for promoting the town and staff writing and supporting grants. The brochures I did promoting the Tankerhoosen Valley and the one Jean Luddy is working on to promote the town are examples.

- **Next Meeting:** Try to do quarterly. Probably December for next one. Suggested choosing an issue where they would like ideas.