

# **Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative Meeting Notes - 3/11/19**

Our meeting was held at the Rockville Public Library.

## **Attending**

The 11 member attendees representing 10 of our 13 organizations were:

- Lori Bajorek - Vernon Education Foundation
- Don Bellingham - Vernon Greenways Volunteers
- Ginny Gingras - Tolland County Agricultural Center
- Joe King - Friends of Valley Falls
- Ann Letendre - Friends of HRLP
- Jean Luddy - Vernon Historical Society
- Jean Merz - Vernon Garden Club
- Mary Millican - Strong Family Farm
- Nancy Strong - Strong Family Farm
- Cindy Trenholm - The Vernon Chorale
- Phyllis Winkler - Arts Center East

Also participating:

- Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen
- Jennifer Johnston - RPL Executive Director
- Caitlin Kelley - RPL Assistant Director

## **Working With the Rockville Public Library**

- Jennifer and Caitlin introduced themselves and discussed the changes at RPL as it is being integrated into the town. They are reaching out to new areas of the community exploring new programs and partnerships.
- The Community Room where we met will be more available for use by town organizations including VVC. They hope to make RPL more of a community center.
- We are invited to distribute our flyers and literature at the library.
- The Friends of the Library organization is being redefined.
- They will explore hosting some of Hartford Foundation's training programs.

- **Liability Insurance** - As a foundation the library required groups using it to have their own insurance. Now this requirement is loosening and a new policy will be established. We have discussed insurance before - larger organizations have it, others don't. The Vernon Community Network is considering providing an umbrella to member organizations for liability coverage.

### **Organization Updates & News**

- **Arts Center East** was represented by Phyllis Winkler. There are 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. Their 3 Walk Weekend is May 18 and 19.
- **Strong Family Farm** had their zoning change approved by the PZC. Their big project this year will be raised beds. Nancy introduced their new Exec Mary Millican.
- **The Vernon Chorale's** Spring concert is April 6 at St. Bernards Church in Rockville. They are interviewing for a new Conducting Fellow including RHS grads.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** has new leadership with Laurie Bajorek as president and Pam Reynolds as VP. Laurie introduced herself and updated us on VEF plans.
- **Vernon Garden Club's** Annual Plant Sale is scheduled for May 11 at VCMS. They are concerned about their aging membership.
- **Vernon Greenways Volunteers** Kickoff Meeting is scheduled for May 2 with a program on Bears. The Emerald Ash Borer is in neighboring towns and could be in Vernon. It's been challenging getting professional support to do annual Beetlemania checks.
- **Vernon Historical Society** is collecting books for their end of April, beginning of May annual book sale. Next year is Rockville High School's anniversary. VHS will do a June program and is working with the school on exhibits.
- **Vernon Lion's Club** - The club has been reactivated and is planning a number of fundraisers and eye screening, but they aren't a good fit for VVC.

## Town & School News

- **Rockville High School Volunteer Day** - Several VVC organizations had tables at this November event. Vernon Historical Society communicated with sign ups by text and might get help with their book sale. Strong Farm also usually gets a few volunteers. Perhaps RHS should not hold this event until the new year begins when more of our activities have been planned.
- **Vernon Events** will be replaced with a new publication from **Wicked Good News** called **Vernon Connection**. I talked with Diane Wheelock who is coordinating and the first issue is due out mid April. The Administration considers this first issue a test as it is more expensive to produce. Like the old publication articles will be limited to 300 words and be both online and mailed to homes. If they decide to proceed the next quarterly issue would be out this in July.
- The **Senior Center** is expanding hours, scope of services and adding a new assistant program coordinator. There has been little involvement of our members as a result of our meeting there last September. Perhaps we'll try to meet with them again in the Fall.
- **Communications Committee** - As you know the town, under Mike Purcaro, is reviewing and recreating our communication systems - internal and external, print and online. I am part of the committee representing VVC.
  - In order to receive a larger grant from Hartford Foundation we hired one of their recommended consultants, who has been gathering data over the winter with an online survey and focus groups. There were 500+ survey responses.
  - We were included in the February 11 Focus Group and you were all invited to participate. A number took part and hopefully we made our case.
  - The committee is meeting in early April to learn the results and what is next. I'll share the results before our May meeting.

## Organizational Promotion

- **Tankerhoosen Newsletter** - I put out an early spring 'Upcoming Events' newsletter in March which included many of your events. I'll do another in late April so keep me posted on your activities. Teri Rogers' Vernon Community Network shared the newsletter with her list.
- **Vernon Healthfest** is coming up April 6 & 7. Again about 90 exhibitors and 40 talks. The event benefits the Vernon Youth Services Bureau and is a good low cost way to meet the public. I will have a table for The Tankerhoosen and am doing a talk titled 'Get Out! Outside That Is; Just For The Health Of It.' I also had a table for VVC last year but found it hard to communicate who we are in a way that mattered to people.
- **CT Trails Day** is June 1 & 2 this year. The only Vernon events I am aware now is that the Manchester Land Conservation Trust will lead a hike at Risley Reservoir and Vernon Greenways Volunteers will be involved again with the multi town history Bike Hike.

- **CT Open House Weekend** is June 8 & 9 this year. Strong Family Farm, the Vernon Historical Society and the Friends of Valley Falls will participate. I still favor doing our own for Vernon on a different day.
- **Bolton 2020 300<sup>th</sup>** - Bolton is having their 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2020 planning events for most months and culminating in a large October parade. From 1720 until 1808 Vernon was part of Bolton and we share almost 90 years of common history, so this is our anniversary too. I have been part of Bolton's 300<sup>th</sup> Committee since last May in an effort to educate both communities about our common history. Several projects are underway in involving the Vernon Historical Society and, hopefully, other of your organizations to promote our common heritage. How might your organization participate?
- **Town Signs** - Vernon is now charging us to use their big signs.

### Ideas From Other Towns

- **DEEP's 'Sky's The Limit'** hiking challenge. Visit 10 parks, take and email 2 photos, receive a medallion or lapel pin. Learn more at <https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?q=561864>
- **Hartford Business Journal** article on joining a nonprofit board. Learn more at <http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/article/20190204/PRINTEDITION/301319960>
- **Windsor Historical Society** recently had a promotion on Legacy Gifts. Our larger organizations should consider doing this too. Larn more at <http://tinyurl.com/yx9xhzt8>
- **Connecticut Magazine** had an article on the Future of Museums. At the Mark Twain statue in front of Hartford's Town Hall an Augmented Reality version of Twain has been created that moves and talks on your iPad or phone. The concept is similar to the Pokemon game and is a forerunner of future museum interaction. Learn more at <http://tinyurl.com/yxv4leqh>

### Next Meetings

- Our next quarterly meeting is **Monday, May 13** at **Arts Center East**.
- **July 9 Event**. Driggs farm won't be available this year so we are considering holding the event at the Tolland County Ag Center with a picnic and perhaps a tour by a Master Gardner, exploration of the micro green greenhouse, and for those interested, a walk to the experimental gardens along the Shenipsit Trail. Ginny is coordinating with TCAC.

Jon Roe  
3/27/19