

Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative Meeting Notes - 5/13/19

Our meeting was held at Arts Center East.

Attending

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

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

Also participating:

- Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen
- Shaun Gately - Vernon Economic Development Coordinator
- Caitlin Kelley - Economic Development Coordinator Intern

Sustainable Vernon

- Our guest today was Shaun Gately who as Acting Town Planner coordinates our Sustainable Vernon program which is part of Sustainable CT. We spent most of the meeting learning about the program and considering how our individual organizations could participate and benefit.
- The majority of Vernon's input was required by May 1 so we await feedback and have until August 1 to make changes or adjustments. If all goes well we should receive a Silver Certification.
- For a refresher on the program see
http://www.tankerhoosen.info/news/upcoming_sustainable_vernon_2019.htm.

Organization Updates & News

- **Arts Center East** will have their new kiln operating soon and have an upcoming tag sale.
- **Friends of HRLP's** are still working the Pleasantview Drive boardwalk project.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** are working on their Heritage Center. Their 3 Walk Weekend is May 18 and 19. The biennial 'Artists' Day At The Farm' will be on August 18. The work on the dam at Valley Falls Park is nearly complete and includes handicap fishing access.
- **Strong Family Farm** had their zoning change approved by the PZC. Their big project this year is raised beds. Lots of Summer activities scheduled. Their matching grant fundraiser concludes at the end of June.
- **The Vernon Chorale's** Spring concert is June 1 at St. Bernards Church in Rockville. They are interviewing for a new Conducting Fellow including RHS grads.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** is again giving a new book to every 1st grader. They are also taking applications for their annual mini-grants.
- **Vernon Garden Club's** Annual Plant Sale at VCMS was a success.
- **Vernon Greenways Volunteers** Kickoff Meeting was 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 the annual Beetlemania checks. VGV is also now maintaining the new planting at the Suspended Bridge.
- **Vernon Historical Society** book sale went well. Next year is Rockville High School's 150th anniversary and Jean is working with the school. VHS will do a June program and is working with the school on exhibits.
- **The Tankerhoosen** - Jon was interviewed at CT Voice Channel by Ann Bonney for her 'Good News Show.' The show on Vernon's trails will air in August.

Organizational Promotion

- **Vernon Healthfest** - This was held the first weekend in April. The town used the event to promote the Sustainable Vernon initiative. We had much better booth placement this year. The Tankerhoosen, Strong Family Farm, Conservation Commission and Vernon Park & Rec had exhibits. I received a lot of interest in The Tankerhoosen passing out many brochures and building our mailing and MeetUp lists. Mayor Champagne stopped by.
 - Town Engineer Dave Smith, CC Chairman Ryan Goad and I gave talks relating to sustainability or the outdoors. They weren't well attended as attendees are more interested in health talks.

- **Tank Newsletter** - I put out a May promotional newsletter including many of your events. I'll do another for June so keep me posted on your activities. This will likely be the last one until September.
- **CT Trails Weekend - June 1 & 2.**
 - Vernon Park & Rec is doing a Braille Trail Walk on June 2.
 - Manchester Land Conservation Trust is doing a hike at Risley Reservoir on June 2.
- **CT Open House Day - June 8.**
 - Strong Family Farm, FOVF, VHS, ACE and NECWM will all be open with activities.
 - I would still favor doing our own for Vernon on a different day.
- **Vernon's Annual Public Works Community Day - Saturday, September 28** at Public Works on Route 30. Town nonprofits are invited to participate. I had a tent last year for our Vernon Volunteers, but have a conflict this year. If you would like to meet families contact Anne-Marie Carlson, Department of Public Works at acarlson@vernon-ct.gov or (860) 870-3500.
- **Bolton 2020 300th** - Bolton is having their 300th Anniversary Celebration in 2020 and are planning events for most months 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 300th 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 & School News

- **Vernon Events** was replaced with a new publication, **Vernon Connection** from **Wicked Good News**. The first issue is out. At this point only including from town departments and commissions are included.
- **Communications Steering 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. They gathered data over the winter with an online survey and focus groups.
 - The results are finally ready with a presentation this Thursday. I'll be away so Ann will attend. I expect to review the report later and will summarize for you.

Fundraising

- Many organizations and financial planners are encouraging seniors over 70 who are receiving required annual payments from their IRA's to make their charitable donations from this source. Donations directly from IRA's are excluded from your income for tax purposes. Consider promoting this to your members.
- Organizations are also urging members to consider donations through wills, trusts, life insurance, IRA's, 401k's, annuities, charitable gift annuities and land. You must be a 501 (c)(3) organization and provide your Federal EIN number.

Special Summer Meeting

- **Monday, July 8 Event.** To be held 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. Details to follow.

Next Quarterly Meeting

- Our next quarterly meeting is **Monday, September 9**. Location to be determined. Please add it to your calendar.

Jon Roe
6/19/19