

Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative

Meeting Notes - 9/09/19

Our meeting was held at Strong Family Farm.

Attending

The 8 member attendees representing 9 of our 13 organizations were:

- Lori Bajorek - Vernon Education Foundation
- Don Bellingham - Vernon Greenways Volunteers
- Ginny Gingras - Tolland County Agricultural Center & Vernon Garden Club
- Kayli Hertel- Arts Center East & Vernon Historical Society
- Ann Letendre - Friends of HRLP
- Maryann Levesque - Friends of Valley Falls
- Mary Millican - Strong Family Farm
- Nancy Strong - Strong Family Farm

Also participating:

- Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen
- Cynthia Zingler - Vernon Public Schools

Town News

- **New Vernon Website & Calendar** - Jeff Cohen's Imageworks is creating the new website which is expected to be online by the end of the year. Awaiting the new Communication Specialist before we are further involved.
- **Communication Specialist** - I was part of the group writing the Job Requirements and will be on the Interview Team. They were posted, applications received and interviews are beginning.
- **Rockville Public Library Expansion** - The town is purchasing the property to the West of RPL for additional parking. With it comes the old Israel Kellogg house, originally used as a boarding house and later convalescent home and home for boys. Depending on its condition the house could be used for a variety of town activities.
- **Performing Arts Space** - The Administration is working with UConn to create a Performing Arts Center in the old Senior Center building. Two Public Forums are being held for public input.
- **2020 Plan of Conservation & Development** - Every 10 years Vernon is required to create this plan with the participation of residents under the Planning & Zoning Commission. A Request For Proposal went out this summer to hire a company to put this together for us. The last POCD, published in 2012, was very thorough so just needs a review and update.

- **CT Path Heritage Trail** - A few years ago Jason Newton from Massachusetts worked with Vernon researching the path his ancestor Rev. Thomas Hooker took to reach Hartford with his congregation in 1636. He believes it came through Vernon along the Tankerhoosen River Valley and is now working with us and others to create a state recognized trail through town using existing trails.

School News

- **Community Service Fair** - For the past two years we have participated in Rockville High School's November Volunteer Fair offering opportunities for students to get required volunteer hours. Trying to talk with students during lunch time was challenging so Cynthia Zingler talked with us about other ideas. We felt we would have more success with parents and outside lunch time. It was agreed that this year we would participate at what they are calling the Community Service Fair on the evening of **Monday, October 7** when parents will be visiting the school and meeting teachers.
- **150th RHS Anniversary** - Jean Luddy and the Vernon Historical Society have been working with RHS on exhibits for their 2020 anniversary. Memorabilia is being collected from graduates and some exhibits are on display now.

Organizational Promotion Opportunities

- **Tankerhoosen Newsletter** - September and October newsletters of Fall events were published including many of your events. There won't be another until late Winter for Spring events.
- **Strong Family Farm Harvest Festival** - Once again our organizations are invited to participate in this event to be held on **Saturday, October 19**. Let Nancy know if interested.
- **Vernon Connection** - The second issue of the town quarterly magazine was published in August. We have been asked to contribute four articles as we did with *Vernon Events*, but its not clear in which issue we will begin. Have heard nothing about the upcoming Fall issue.
- **Vernon Healthfest** - This event will not be held in 2020. Some of our groups usually take part.
- **Bolton 2020 300th** - Bolton is celebrating their 300th Anniversary 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 for the past year 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?

Fundraising

- **Hartford Library Nonprofit Workshop Series** - The Fall Series includes a Grant Workshop on **Friday, October 18**.
- **East Windsor Historical Society Road Trip** - Nancy Masters from the EWHS is an experienced fundraiser and recently spoke to Bolton farm related committees. They also have an expanding museum complex with displays and projects we might learn from. A field trip to visit them has been arranged for **Monday morning, October 21**.
- The **Vernon Community Fund** - The Hartford Foundation For Public Giving is establishing a \$100,000 fund for each of its 29 towns. Ours kicks off on **Wednesday, November 6**. It will be led by an Advisory Committee of town residents who reflect the community. \$50,000 will be distributed in the first year. You should be able to apply for these grants.
- **Sustainable CT Community Match Fund** - Last Spring Vernon developed a sustainable action plan and we expect to receive recognition. Sustainable CT has developed a partnership with a crowd sourcing organizing and will match money raised dollar for dollar up to \$25,000 per project. Your organization can likely apply.

Organization Updates & News

- **Arts Center East** will have their new kiln operating soon.
- **Friends of HRLP's** Pleasantview Drive boardwalk project has been delayed.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** are working on their Heritage Center. The biennial 'Artists' Day At The Farm' was held in August. State Historian Walter Woodward and his band provided the program at their September Annual Meeting.
- **Friends of the Vernon Arts Commission** supported the FOVF's Woodward program.
- **New England Civil War Museum** held two programs this fall and will hold its Candlelight Tour on October 26.
- **Northern CT Land Trust's** Annual Meeting included a presentation on Plant Invasives.
- **Strong Family Farm's** annual Harvest Festival will take place on October 19. VVC members are encouraged to participate. The fundraiser met its goal and the closing on Meetinghouse Hill took place recently. The 51 acres of pastures will soon again be part of the farm.
- **The Vernon Chorale's** Winter concert is December 7 at St. Bernards Church in Rockville. An interview with Cindy Trenholm is posted on the CVC website.

- **Vernon Education Foundation** gave 233 new books to first graders. They also gave 9 grants to teachers worth \$3,100. Their membership has increased from 5 to 14 members.
- **Vernon Garden Club** has begun their monthly program series.
- **Vernon Greenways Volunteers** completed a busy season with a Bug Day survey in September. Tree of Heaven plants were found on Dobson Road near the river. They are hosts for the Spotted Lanterfly invasive making it's way eastward.
- **Vernon Historical Society** is working with Rockville High School with displays for next year's 150th anniversary. Their annual Craft Fair will be the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Next Quarterly Meeting

- Our next quarterly meeting is **Monday, November 11** at 9 a.m. It will be hosted by Drew Crandall for the Rockville Downtown Association. Please add it to your calendar.

Jon Roe
10/06/19