

Vernon Volunteers' Collaborative Meeting Notes - 5/17/21

Our meeting was held at Strong Family Farm.

Attending

The 5 member attendees representing 6 of our 13 organizations were:

- Laurie Bajorek - Vernon Education Foundation
- Don Bellingham - Vernon Greenways Volunteers, Friends of HRLP
- Jean Luddy - Vernon Historical Society
- Nancy Strong - Strong Family Farm
- Phyllis Winkler- Arts Center East

Also participating: Jon Roe - The Tankerhoosen

Promotional Opportunities

- **CT Trails Weekend** - June 5 & 6. No participation planned this year.
- **CT Open House Day** - June 12. No participation planned this year.
- **Vernon Voice** - The first quarterly issue of Vernon's new magazine was for Spring, in which we did not participate. It arrived in early April. For the Summer issue, scheduled to arrive next Memorial Day we provided four articles. Due to a late start the schedule for 2021 is tight and constantly changing. We are providing 4 articles for what was supposed to be the Fall issue, but is now uncertain.
- **Vernon's New Website & Calendar** - Not much feedback. Still feels preliminary to some. Suggested we approach Dave Owens about giving us a survey for feedback and coming to the September meeting. Some organizations like ACE are taking full advantage of the Calendar, but it's hard to measure value. Some concern about Push vs Pull communication. Dave does re-post many of our Facebook posts.
- **New Vernon Brochure** - Jean Luddy has proposed creating a brochure promoting our organizations and key activities and locations in town. It will be map based with short descriptions of organizations plus a QR code for more information. She met with and has the support of Dave Owens and Dave Smith. She hopes we can get a grant, but the Vernon Community Grant program is not yet in place. Next steps are finding a graphic designer and exploring financing options. A key consideration is whether we want to reach only those in Vernon or our neighboring towns as well. This will affect quantity needed and distribution approach. The brochure would also be available online.

- **Social Media Promotion** - Posting events on our MeetUp site as well as Facebook. When more activity planned will again do Tankerhoosen e-newsletters.

Town News

- **New Town Personnel** Since Last Meeting
 - Dave Owens - Communication Specialist
 - George McGregor - Town Planner
 - Matt Hellman - Social Services Director
- **WFSB's 20 Town in 20 Days** - Once again featured Vernon. Strong Family Farm and the Rail Trail had spots.
- **Projects of Interest:** Golfland, Talcottville Bridge working. Dart Hill Bridge replacement postponed until 2022.
- **Town Sponsored Events:** Fourth of July (June 30), the July Summer Days Community Carnival, National Night Out (Aug. 3) and probably Winterfest will be held again this year.
- **Vernon's Summer Programs & Concerts** will be on this year.
- **2021 POCD** - Information is all online.

Organization Updates & News

- **Arts Center East** will have their new kiln operating soon, just need enough students. Their annual Tag Sale is being planned. Classes will be held now both virtual and in-person. They are putting their Gift Shop online.
- **Friends of HRLP** is working to connect the Pleasantville Drive Boardwalk with other sections of the Hockanum River Linear Park. Bikes have become a problem on the boardwalk as it is narrow and represents a hazard. New signs are needed.
- **Friends of Valley Falls** continues to work on opening their Heritage Center. Spring events were cancelled but the biannual Artists Day at the Farm is planned for August 22. The historic field oak, over 200 years old, was recently taken down as it was deteriorating rapidly.
- **New England Civil War Museum** has cut back on reenactments for the year, but will march in the Talcottville Memorial Day Parade for the first time.
- **Northern CT Land Trust** held their annual Canoe Paddle of Upper Bolton Lake in May and plans to hold their annual fall Webster property hike in October. The fall hike at Talcott Ravine was cancelled as the Main Street Bridge replacement has cut off access.

- **Strong Family Farm's** Farm Stand opens in June. Some events not being done this year but the Raised Bed Gardens, and Children's Chicken program going ahead. 5K Chicken Run moved to September and the October Scarecrow Contest and Harvest Festival will be held as before. Proposed sharing a bookkeeper with other organizations.
- **The Vernon Chorale** will release its last virtual video this week. It will then begin practicing together in a church and plans to hold their Christmas Concert in December.
- **Tolland County Ag Center** is beginning to host programs again. The Antique Tractor program is coming up and the annual 4-H Fair will be held in August.
- **Vernon Education Foundation** has continued with a number of its regular projects including giving 300 books to each first graders. They worked with Craig's Kitchen on gift baskets for children. In the plans are creating a website although they have an active Facebook page.
- **Vernon Garden Club** will begin holding monthly meetings at the Congregational Church in June. They have been maintaining the Gateway Gardens during the pandemic.
- **Vernon Greenways Volunteers** is updating and repairing its Rail Trail Mural. They also raised funds to repair the Rockville Spur Tankerhoosen River bridge and add a railing to the Suspended Bridge stairs. Preparation of roadside gardens beginning and they will again do Rail Trail repair.
- **Vernon Historical Society** had their best year making \$17,000 with their recent annual Book Sale. They plan to hold their November Craft Fair as well. Jean Luddy led a history walk in Rockville recently in the Talcott Park area. Nice to be out and together again. A tour guide is being published with the Cemetery Commission for Grove Hill Cemetery and Jean will lead a group of Fifth Graders on a tour of the cemetery also. In 2022 she will teach a course on town history at the Vernon Adult Education Program.

Next Quarterly Meeting

- Our next quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Monday, September 13** at 9 a.m. Please add it to your calendar.

Jon Roe
6/21/21