

Economic Development Council
6/5/2017 5:15PM
Town Hall Conference Room A

Attending: Michael Tragner, chair, Marjorie Ryerson, Winston Sadoo, Ken Cadow, CJ Stumpf, Peter Reed and Ross Evens (selectboard rep). Missing member: Jay Hooper.

Welcome to New Members on the council, CJ Stumpf, Peter Reed. The board members each introduced themselves and gave a quick personal summery of their backgrounds.

CJ Stumpf of East Randolph trains and teaches horse training, is involved in invasive species management and rural broadband development, and has a background in software and telecommunications systems and business development.

Peter Reed of Braintree is the branch manager, for both the Bethel and Randolph branches, of Northfield Savings Bank. His background is in wholesale banking and investment banking.

Michael Tragner, Chair, is a forester by training, and served for many years as President of Fountains America. The company recently merged with a larger company.

Marjorie Ryerson served as both a town selectman and a State Rep for many years. She was a writing professor for 18 years and is a book author, poet, photographer and journalist. She teaches poetry for Middlebury College at a Bread Loaf writers' conference.

Winston Sadoo, vice chair, moved from NYC to Vermont 10 years ago, He is an electronics engineer and worked for ABC-television (in all areas —especially sports coverage) all over the world. In that capacity, he earned 11 Emmy Awards (ABC News, ABC sports). He currently serves on the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission and is on the ORCA Media board.

Ken Cadow is the director of career pathways and workforce development at Randolph Union High School. His background is in supply chain management. He moved here 20 years ago nad has been teaching her for 15 years.

Jay Hooper is a recently elected State Rep from Brookfield. He graduated a year ago from Connecticut College. Hooper is a newly elected State Rep who served this year on the state Ag Committee.

Ross Evans, selectboard liaison, by day is Vice President of a marketing agency in NYC. He primarily works out of his house on Prospect Ave. He is also the co-founder of two startups in Central Vermont, and is an Adjunct Professor of Marketing at CCV for 5 years. He serves on the Randolph Selectboard. He grew up in Northfield.

Council Elections:

Michael Tragner was re-elected as Chair. The vote was unanimous and uncontested. Winston Sadoo was elected as Vice-Chair. The vote was unanimous and uncontested.

CJ Stumpf and Marjorie Ryerson were elected to serve as secretary (note taker and editor respectively)

Council Projects:

The EDC has a \$15K annual budget. The only EDC expenditure to date is \$5K that was given to the pocket park being designed for the Catamount Property at the corner of Pleasant Street and Randolph Avenue.

Pocket Park: Sadoo concerned with the park's location. He feels it is in the wrong location (well off Main Street) and suggested that different locations be considered. He said the park needs restrooms and water. Evans said that as a downtown resident, he is happy with the progress. Evans reminded the council that the pocket park in Montpelier was designed by the same folks who are working on Randolph's and that park has been a strong asset to Montpelier. Sadoo countered, saying Montpelier has lots of offices by that park whose workers utilize the park at lunchtimes. Tragner said the park's funds are approved, contingent on review of the final plan. Further discussion continued about the park.

Randolph Business Directory and Guide to Doing Business in Randolph:

Tragner said the directory includes a database of all the businesses and organizations in the town, information that the RACDC will share. He said the directory and the guide to doing business (guide to how to navigate the various processes in town if you're a startup business or want to expand your business) need to be updated, but that they are already serving the town well.

Town Survey: RACDC is conducting a survey of what residents feel is needed in the town. RACDC has had close to 400 responses to its survey already. An AmeriCorps Vista volunteer at RACDC has updated the entire database and is doing an analysis of the survey. Evans said the EDC will get survey and results and discuss at a future meeting.

Other EDC actions:

- Tragner reported that he had heard from Selectboard chair Trini Brassard, who called to support having the EDC reach out to businesses in the town.
- Ryerson has a team of two people who are assembling a list of ideas to help strengthen Belmains.
- Tragner met with Paul Rea before the last meeting. Rea is considering reestablishing the Mountain Bike Festival with Perry Armstrong that he ran years ago. Then, about 15K people attended. Rea and Armstrong are very interested in starting that festival again. Tragner said Rea is engaged with RASTA now (a Rochester organization). Rea will present his plans at a future EDC meeting.

Other Projects:

- Cadow said Randolph's internet presence is pretty abysmal. He suggested putting together a guide of what to do in Randolph – airBnB locations, meals available at One Main, Black Krim, etc. He stressed that people put their agendas together via the internet, now.

- Evans asked about the “Tap the Valley effort,” which was not a success. Even BALE wanted to see it happen but for whatever reason it flopped. Followup?
- BALE has been talking about putting up a storefront in Randolph. BALE is good at visioning; RACDC is more of a management group. Sadoo expressed concern about information that had been promised to the public by RACDC but that hasn’t happened.
- 3 Stallion Inn sale to school: Concern that trail access will be lost to the community. Tragner will email Sam Sammis about whether the trail access at the Three Stallion Inn that has been available to the town is going cease being available after the private school takes ownership of the Inn.
- Ryerson told the group that Windover House is for sale, and she suggested that it would make a perfect hotel – it has rooms with private baths, garages, and parking, is midway between the interstate and the village. It is on the market for its appraised value of approximately \$787K. There is potentially help from the state level (Megan Smith – was commissioner under Shumlin) that would allow this concept to move forward. The place is move in ready. Evans offered to email Steve Cook to see about help in developing Windover House.
- Cadow said in the high school’s celebration of learning last week, he was struck by how much of an recognition and appreciation there still is in the area’s students for Agriculture. He is working with others in the school who are working on economic development and working with students about what they want to pursue, and the possibilities are vast.
- Cadow wants the EDC to use a SWOT tool to help it assess where it needs to go. He has used this assessment and planning tool previously with a number of different strategic and econ dev committees. Mentioned that 14,000 cars go past I-89 exit 4 every day. (look at the VT GIS website – great resource)
- Cadow will email link to VT GIS and SWOT document, and EDC will fill out SWOT for next meeting.
- Discussion ensued about the Mountain Bike Festival and possible EDC coordination of the Oct. 7 Brewfest, which will be taking place at Ayers Brook Farm this year.

A small committee of Sadoo, Stumpf and Ryerson (was there a 4th?) will meet to draw up a list of future projects for the Council. Potential Projects include Business Outreach; the Mountain Bike Festival; the BrewFest; charging stations in Randolph downtown/P&R (Two Rivers Ottaqueechee was offering a \$25K grant last year to build charging stations and Council members agreed that they should act on that), SWOT analysis; Windover Project; Survey; Downtown Wi-Fi network; entrepreneur-investor educational fair (WRIC/Slow Money Vermont); the future of the Armstrong Dairy Farm of 400 acres (in family since 1700s); Randolph’s Internet presence for visitor planning of events and itineraries (better presence will promote local resource utilization); 3 Stallion Inn Trail access; BALE storefront.

Other business:

Motion: Sadoo moved

That REDC make a donation to the Preservation Trust of Vermont in the amount of \$5K to support the purchase of 22 acres of land at exit 4 from Sam Sammis.
Seconded by Peter

Discussion:

Ryerson: The fundraising for that purchase is currently underway and the deadline for raising the \$1M cost of the land is June 15.

Preservation Trust takes on the work of buying and conserving real estate so it can't be built on through eternity. Then perhaps hand it to Miles Hooper to manage? Reed "don't plan the future". Trust reportedly said "the town of Randolph has worked so hard and so valiantly that we might give the land to Randolph"

Vote was 6-0-0 in favor. The allocation would require approval by Selectboard at its next meeting.

Approval of Minutes from April meeting:

4-0-0 approved (2 abstentions from Reed and Stumpf, who were not present)

Meeting adjourned 6:58 pm

The next meeting of the Council will be July 10. [EDC Meetings are held 1st Monday of the month excepting holidays]