

**What's Next Middlesex
One Year Follow-up Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2019
Runney School**

Present: Sorsha Anderson, Kelly Ault, Marsha Bancroft, Joanne Breidenstein, Barbara Buckley, Elliot Burg, August Burns, Mark Bushnell, Ben Carlson, Susan Clark, Nancy Farrell, Peter Farrell, Anne Greensfelder, Beth Holtzman, Peter Hood, Mary Neville Hood, Kimberly Jessup, Theo Kennedy, Michael Levine, Sandy Levine, George Longenecker, Adrienne Magida, Dave Magida, Chris McVeigh, Mary Nealon, Mitch Osiecki, John Rayhill, Lauri Scharf, Dave Shepard, Ursula Stanley, Jon Udis, Paul Zabriskie and Susan Warren

The meeting began with Susan Clark presenting an overview of the What's Next Middlesex (WNM) project focusing on the four committees formed from that event that have been working over the year since the event to implement ideas generated during WNM. Following Susan's introduction, the committees gave reports on their efforts over the past year.

Economic Development and Infrastructure (presented by Theo Kennedy and Kelly Ault): Theo Kennedy began the presentation for the economic development portion. He stated that the WNM event led to the actions the committee has taken. Past themes have reemerged in this process, such as interest in promoting development of Middlesex village. There was interest in the committee in a village feasibility study that led to impetus for updating Middlesex's town plan that had lapsed since having an active town plan is a requirement for applying for a Municipal Planning Grant that the committee was interested in pursuing. A designation as a Village Center has been achieved for Middlesex village; this designation is helpful in applying for grants.

For infrastructure, the committee felt it might benefit from its' own leader.

Kelly Ault spoke about interest in an alliance of Middlesex businesses. There was an initial gathering of Middlesex business owners with discussion of characteristics of Middlesex that would be of interest to businesses that might to locate in town, both in the village and elsewhere. The committee is interested in how to survey town residents about business interest and opportunity. There is support for and interest in buying from neighbors.

Elliott Burg presented about climate change preparation and sustainability. Issues that came up on these topics included the following:

- Does Middlesex have an emergency plan?
- Is there a place to gather, an emergency shelter?
- Knowledge of who in town might need help in an emergency?
- Long term road/infrastructure plan taking into account likely impacts from climate change.

The discussions of the issues led to a developing a list of ideas:

- Compiling of list of who to contact in an emergency
- Community garden

- Survey of existing business community and resources
- Potential update of Middlesex Operator's Manual
- Creation of a spreadsheet for economic development and infrastructure where ideas can be compiled.
- Business/village support group

Peter Hood noted there are new road construction/maintenance requirements that result in increased cost for the town.

Community Spaces and Events (presented by Joanne Breidenstein and Elliot Burg):

The committee has developed a partial inventory of community spaces; this may be able to be combined with another group.

Events included a series of mud season workshops:

- Yoga
- Training in Microsoft Excel for bookkeeping
- Dream interpretation

This series was a success and they will be looking to hold another series in 2020.

Elliot spoke about acoustical upgrades for the Rumney School gymnasium that would improve events held in the space including its' use as the rain site for the bandstand concert series. Based on recent conversations with the School Board these improvements are likely to take place.

Communications Committee (Susan Clark and Lauri Scharf):

Creating a community calendar was a focus for the committee. Front Porch Forum (FPF) includes a community calendar function, so the committee undertook to promote this feature. Lauri presented a summary of the ways the FPF community calendar can be accessed (including on the Middlesex website www.middlesexvermont.org and the What's Next Middlesex website www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org) and tips for using the calendar for information about events:

- Check for events
- Post information about events
- Double check on events to make sure someone else hasn't already posted
- Double check the time and location of events
- Find regularly scheduled meetings and events
- Post a description of an event and follow up with another post a reminder as a "discussion"

Other projects the Committee has considered are a community newsletter and a new version of the Middlesex Operator's Manual. Possibly FPF now helps to serve the same purpose as a newsletter. If there were to be a newsletter it might be online or with limited printed copies. Much of the information included in the printed version of the Middlesex Operator's Manual is on the town website although it needs updating.

Theo posed question of how to make Middlesex a destination for the many people who travel past and through it.

Trails Working Group (Mary Nealon and Jon Udis):

The presentation began with listing out the goals of the Trails Working Group:

1. Improve/provide signage for existing trails
2. Identify partnerships
3. Outreach to community regarding trail resources
4. Create new trail networks
5. Link trails in Middlesex to other towns

Existing trails include the following:

- Chases Mountain Trail in the Middlesex Town Forest
- Trails in the vicinity of Rumney School
- Class 4 roads
- Trail system at the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area

Next steps:

- Meet with landowners about making a more formal trail network near Rumney School
- Reclaim the Bear Swamp Class 3 and 4 road loop where the Class 4 section is in rough shape.

Peter noted there has been a reduction in Class 4 road maintenance that the town intends to reverse in order to maintain this resource. Kelly recommended informing landowners of protection from liability in state statute for landowners who allow access to their property. Elliott asked if ATV access to trails had come up – Jon replied it hadn't so far.

Susan noted that the work of the four action groups can be found at the What's Next Middlesex website, www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org