

Whitingham Economic Development Group

Jacksonville, VT 05342-0529

**Minutes of September 26, 2016**

*These minutes will be accepted into the Public Record at a future meeting of the Whitingham EDG*

Attendees: EDG Chair Gretchen Havreluk; EDG Members: Jenepher Burnell, Phil Edelstein, potential member: Kyle Frey; Selectboard Chair, Keith Bronson, Road Commissioner, Stanley Janovsky, SB Admin Asst/Zoning Admin/Floodplain Admin, Gig Zboray.

Special Guests: John Broker-Campbell, Regional Flood Plain Manager and Josh Carvajal-State River Management Engineer

Ms. Havreluk opened the meeting at 7:36am by welcoming Kyle Frey and his partner Nancy, who couldn’t make it today, to the Whitingham Economic Development Group.

Minutes of July 20, 2016: A motion to approve the Minutes of July 20, 2016 as written was made by Gretchen Havreluk, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.

Website: Review and discussion of RFP. EDG members will look at this document at their leisure and discuss it thoroughly at the next meeting. Ms. Havreluk will look for possible grant funding for a website overhaul.

Broadband: Mr. Edelstein has recused himself from discussions regarding broadband needs and options for the Municipal Center because he has recently become a temporary consultant for VTel Wireless. In prior discussions with Fairpoint Communications Mr. Edelstein found that Fairpoint is only willing to upgrade DSL service in the Town if the Town agreed to pay for it. The cost would be approximately $250,000. VTel is currently serving 40 homes in town and it has been reported that the service is faster than Fairpoint. However, VTel does not work on the western side of Town (past Corse Road).

Mr. Edelstein feels it would make sense for the Town to get involved, perhaps by installing a tower to serve more residents.

Action steps: encourage your neighbors to try VTel. Mr. Edelstein is available to help.

Flood Mitigation: Josh Carvajal explained the potential of a bypass channel starting upstream of the Municipal basketball court and diverting flood waters in a channel on the back side of the Municipal Center beyond the parking lot. A “floodplain storage” area could be cleared on residents property a ways downstream before the Jacksonville Store.

The current stream is considered “bankful” having potential for overflow in a storm event every 1 to 3 years. The bypass channel would take the overflow and divert is to the floodplain storage and slow down the waters as they approach the small state owned culvert going under Routes 100/112.

Mr. Edelstein asked if the bypass idea is good from an engineering standpoint. Mr. Carvajal answered that the Town would need to get an engineer to design it.

Mr. Carvajal also noted that the Floodplan Storage should also be engineered to make sure that it won’t cause problems in the future downstream. However, this project does not need state approval only approval from the local Flood Plain Administrator. Any work in the stream needs ANR permitting.

A bypass was engineered and seems to be working in the town of Ripton, Josh is going to try to find some information about it.

Another option would be to buy out selected buildings and remove them.

Mr. Carvajal suggested finding out which homeowners have flood insurance in the area and who might have filed a “letter of map amendment” with FEMA. Mr. Broker-Campbell noted that having an engineering study done of the area could potentially help homeowners to save money on their flood insurance rates but it shouldn’t cause an increase.

Ms. Havreluk will look into potential grants for funding the engineering needed. There is a Federal Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant annually but it is difficult to get, there is “ERP” money. A lower cost alternative to professional engineering is to use the UVM Capstone Project or something similar from UMass, where graduate students would do the work. Mr. Janovsky will try to get a cost estimate from Trinity Engineering in Stamford.

Mr. Janovsky noted that the Town voted to adopt a “Pre-Disaster All Hazard Mitigation Plan” at the March 1, 2011 Town Meeting. Mr. Carvajal noted that an important step in the process is to update this plan and to include proper references in the Town Plan.

Next meeting: Monthly meetings will now be on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:30am. The next meeting will be **OCTOBER 25TH**.

Ms. Havreluk adjourned the meeting at 9:19am.

Respectfully submitted,

*Gig Zboray*