



## Board Meeting Minutes March 21, 2023 | 8AM

In attendance: Tiffany Saltis, Katye Munger, Tammy Landon, Eddie Ryan, Tiffany Walker, Jessi Travers, Eileen Coughlin, Brian Budrow, Jadziah DeRosia

Absent: Jen Usher, Janelle Howard, Kiana McClure, Michael Talbott

1. Meeting called to order at 8:03

2. Approval of the February board meeting minutes

Motion to approve: Tammy

Second: Jessi

3. Review of the February treasurer's reports

4. Committee reports

a. Streetscape

i. Trash cans - Less complaints, they look a lot better as far as overflow. Josh is scheduling a meeting this week to discuss some proposed redesigns that have more longevity. Will report back at the next meeting.

ii. Reimagining Depot Park - – Continuing to sit on steering committee to see the park redesign come to fruition. The annual tree lighting might need to be moved. Tentatively other locations in Depot Park. Trying to keep the event downtown. Working with Come Alive Outside and the Parks Department to keep it there. Katye mentioned the idea of a permanent tree being planted. City leadership cut the tree down, and now we are not very sustainable with cutting a tree down every year. If we could look for a place for a permanent tree, we could move to a more sustainable, more permanent solution. Tiffany mentioned we don't pay for the tree, it is donated. The tricky part is finding where the home would be, and a tree big enough to make the event special. Drainage is an issue. Backup location is where the farmer's market takes place, so it might be difficult to have a tree in that space. DRP will work with Parks to see if this option could be feasible. Jessi asked about the area where there was a hotel in the 50's across from the Boys and Girls Club. It's an empty space with water/electricity. If we could develop that into a park, plant seeds, etc. When you pull up Evelyn Street right now it is an eyesore, but could be a beautiful space. Everyone loves idea, as we'd like to see more green space in downtown. DRP has explored other spaces that will work to add more parks.

iii. Parklets - Getting ready to roll-out the parklets. We want to give enough time for the decoration of the parklets. We want to have them ready for the Sip and Shop. We have more food and beverage restaurants so we would like to budget to create a parklet for Taco Fresco and Speakeasy. We could have a split parklet. Bring the parklet idea back to food and beverage instead of retail. Retail parklets are only used on the weekends or FNL. There was a community parklet for kids to play. This did get a lot of use. Speakeasy parklet could be a space for both kids to play and to provide a café area for Speakeasy to use. In the past RRA has led this effort, this will now move to DRP. We are in the early stages of rolling this out for the year. We need to repaint the green stripe this year. Brian offered to do some upkeep and building of the parklets.

iv. Center Street Marketplace Park - Focusing on the kids aspect, an art structure and a place to play. Found a cool company that does play structures. Brian pitched an idea, and the architect ran with it. Current administration and Parks are very excited about it. Looking for funding. Monstrum put together an idea and initial drawings were presented to the board. It's a unique space in Rutland, safe from traffic and noise. Monstrum.com is the vendor. Brian to send the plans to the full board. It is a community space and artwork. Place Making Grant could be a possibility. Finding funding and creating a budget, present to the community. Could be 15 months before the new Mayor can get this into the budget.

#### b. Marketing

i. Standard spring marketing. Okemo Explore, met with John from WCAX to explore a curated package. We also want to do click ads for blog posts. "10 Reasons why you should work in Rutland." Etc. Google ads. Tourism Day is coming up, so we can strengthen that relationship. The state only has a budget for \$2M, which is much smaller than other states. Tiffany is working to get Rutland in the mix for advertising.

#### c. Events

i. Shiver Me Shamrocks - Successful event, Tiffany got some good footage. Moving forward, Brian will be working with the businesses on making sure to connect the event organizers with the businesses of street closures.

ii. Spring Sip and Shop - Brian is gathering vendors, and is getting merchants on board to participate. Brian is going to have a hard date of next Friday for participating. Last call reminder will go out next week. Developing a passport type app. This will drive people to all corners of the district. Post-event giveaways for people who went to every business. There will be a QR code that will "check off" a business. People can upload pictures, and can post directly to social media.

iii. Friday Night Live - We only have one date so far, September 1. We have begun gathering vendors for that date. We will also shut down Merchant's Row as a pilot, turning the stage so both sides can see it. Working on more dates. Brian is looking at a Beer Garden. Working with Rutland Beer Works on this idea. Likely on Center Street near the pub. Food options are looking great. Working with Heritage on being the primary

sponsor.

iv. Sidewalk Sales - Brian is working with businesses on sidewalk sales to find out what will work. One thing that works for other businesses is "open house" days. Might be more of a marketing event for clothing retailers. Jazdiah mentioned the need to use the parking spaces in front of retailers. It used to be a huge sales push. It would be great to be able to do something even if it isn't the big event.

v. Whoopie Pie Festival - Helping the committee coordinate restrooms, DJ, etc. Proving support.

vi. Green up Day - Friendly competition downtown to see who want to participate. find out what will work.

vii. Pride Festival - A festival will happen in June. DRP providing some support.

viii. Poetry Walk - Getting downtown businesses to post poems in the windows.

#### d. Business development

i. New grants - 4 officially in. Diamonds and More was just submitted. Eddie is comfortable with it. Bryan and Tiffany looked at the upgrades, they hired another fulltime person. They've added services, streamlined services. Business Expansion Grant boxes are checked through hiring a new employee and streamlining services in-house. Committee is comfortable moving forward. Grants are: Diamonds and More, Taco Fresco (façade), West Street Grill submitted for the new business, Euphoric Hair Experience. All four are asking for \$2,000. These are all outstanding businesses coming to Rutland. Tammy motion to grant all 4 business development grants in the amount of \$2,000. Second by Eileen. Motion passed. Grant will be paid out of the GMP fund until it is fully depleted. Katie mentioned looking for another grant sponsor.

ii. Ribbon Cutting at Euphoric this Saturday.

#### 5. Executive Director update

i. DRP attended the Travel and Recreation Council March Meeting in Middlebury. The meeting included legislative updates, the status of major issues, and state of the industry updates.

ii. DRP is going to attend the VT Tourism Day and Downtown Advocacy Day tomorrow in Montpelier. It will be a good networking opportunity. VT Downtowns will have a setup in the card room. There will be a joint hearing of Senate Economic Development and House Commerce Committees focusing on tourism and destination stewardship. VT downtowns has a testimonial slot where they'll speak to downtowns and VT tourism.

iii. DRP is going to travel to Boston for the Main Street Now 2023 conference.

Cape Air generously covered transportation.  
iv. CORI Placemaking grant

6. New business

7. Old business

- i. DRP board of directors - Committee interest form has been sent to the board. Tiffany will reach out to the board. We have some openings on the board, and the community has been interested in participating.
- ii. DRP office - Decided on the space on Center Street for the new office. Green Screen coming up with Graphics, Ed looking at how the space can be laid out. Might be May or June for a move. The old Trap Door space. Function as an office, micro-museum, welcome center. We want it to be open to Rutland to engage with downtown. Wander on Words to create t-shirts to fundraise. Selfie station, comfy couches, etc.

8. Liaison updates

- a. Board of Alderman
- b. Rutland Redevelopment Authority
  - i. Strategic Planning Initiative - Tiffany attended a SWOT analysis. RRA is looking to design a direction, their role in the committee. Strong relationship between the RRA and the DRP. DRP will meet with RRA once per month. Coordinated approach to reaching out to new businesses. Tiffany will sit on the committee to find a new ED.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25am.