

Machias Revitalization Committee

Minutes - October 13, 2017 @ 7:00 A.M.

Bluebird Ranch Restaurant

Present: Angela Fochesato, Katherine M. Holmes, Josh Rolfe, Sandi Malagara, Marci Gaglioni, Gail Peters, Christina Therrien and Rich Bard **Press:** Bob Berta and Reid Albee

Public Comments: Bob Berta challenged the minutes. He questioned the sentence "The Blueberry Run had 200 runners pre-registered and another 38 registered the day of the run." Angela and others explained that the minutes were correct. It was said at the meeting - the number registered prior to the race was 200 with 38 registering the day of the race. Bob questioned the number who ran in the race. Angela explained all 200 who pre-registered did not run in the race, hence the discrepancy between the number reported by Cool Running which only reports the number who ran. There was no change to the minutes.

Minutes: Josh move to accept the minutes as presented. Sandi seconded. All accepted.

Grants: Regarding the Waterfront Resilience and Renewal Project, Christina reported she is now working with Phil Carey at the state level as her previous contact was unavailable. This grant has not yet been signed by a state representative. Therefore, Christina felt it was premature to ask the town to start the RFP process by October 1st with a submission date of November 1st.

Christine has spoken to Tora Johnson regarding her students at UMM. Her students are willing to conduct an economic and water inundation study in the business area along the river. This will include soil erosion, what happens to the buildings, and effect on jobs. This project should take two semesters.

MRC worked with the town on submitting this proposal and was named as the advisory committee for the grant. It is hoped the signed grant will be done by Monday or Tuesday, October 16th or 17th.

Christina has also contacted Matt Lutkus in Damariscotta as they have been awarded a coastal renewal grant. He shared information and will provide a report to Christina when the work is completed. Christina has also been to meetings in Augusta regarding this issue.

Yoga Fest: Katherine reported the event was scheduled as part of the Harvest Festival in Machias. It occurred only on a small scale. It was suggested the event be tabled until further notice.

Incredible Edible Garden: Angela now has the information from Betsy Fitzgerald regarding what can be done to the foliage along the river to create a trail. Angela needs to contact Lindsay McMann from DCC so the project can move forward. It was suggested that Angela contact Sunrise Opportunity to care for and water the plants. The members of the Arise community can help with the ground work.

Angela is still working on creating a QR for the history walk along this trail. Christina asked for information and photos for there is an historical component to the coastal renewal grant. It was hoped that a student working with Tora Johnson could work on an historical map as well.

Bike Lending: Machias High School has formed the Sprocket Society. They will use the bikes previously donated as parts for repairing the bikes. New bikes can be purchased at Walmart for a discount.

Bad Little Falls Signs: Angela was sent the wrong logo which caused a glitch in the signs being completed. She did correct this error before the signs were produced. Angela will ensure that Dean McGray of Addison has all the correct information before making the signs.

Also at Bad Little Falls there have been some complaints about spray painted signs. These have been removed. In addition, the sign about the fish in the area is illegible. It was originally part of a Maine sea grant project but is now the responsibility of another department. This will be researched and a new sign erected.

Sally Ward has been weeding and caring for the gardens at the falls. This may be an area where the Green Space Committee could work if the committee stays intact after the Canopy Grant. Sally and friends have also picked up trash on the Kennebec Road. All her work is appreciated very much!

Steel Hill: Christina has not heard regarding the grant concerning that portion of Court Street which is known as Steel Hill. Crystal Hitchings helped in writing this grant. The Safe Routes to School program is no longer in effect. Other funds will be needed to address this location.

The discussion with the state concerning curb cuts and sidewalks has been tabled. It was part of a traffic study done earlier in the year. There were eight sites noted and four were selected as most critical. There was

no money available for the second part of the study. It will be another year before Christina can work with Judy East of the WCC of G for funds. However, the crosswalk at Freshie's has been moved to help with traffic and pedestrian issues and a blinking light will be installed shortly at the top of College Hill.

Banners & Murals: Dan Gardner was unable to attend the meeting but has sent a report. Dan has contacted Kehben Grier. The project seems to be moving forward. Sandi reported that Machias Hardware is currently being painted. It would be a prime location for a mural. (Each mural is a separate piece of cloth that hangs from the building.) According to Kehben Grier who Sandi has consulted each banner would cost \approx \$400. There are currently no funds available for this project but building owners might sponsor a mural. There is a previous example of a mural that hung on the Chamber of Commerce Building. It was requested that Angela ask Kehben to attend the next MRC meeting.

Rich Bard announced this will be his last MRC meeting as he is relocating. All present thank him for his service to the committee and the DCC. He will be greatly missed. Rich also informed us Downeast Magazine has some very favorable comments about Machias on its Facebook page.

Several members expressed interest in developing a reason we could advertise for visitors to make Machias a destination. Then we would have these current ideas as reasons visitors would remain here. The current festivals draw a respectable number of people, but we need something permanent. It was suggested that we remember to call Washington County the First County in America. As it is, due to its physical location along the East Coast.

Green Space Committee: Several trees have been planted around town. There has been an issue with watering. Due to such dry conditions the plants need to be watered daily. However, Mike Shoppee and crew are unable to devote that much time to the effort. The DCC has agreed to water at their location. Larry Johnson is watering the hydrangea trees at the site near his house. Sandi has been watering from the trunk of her car...It was suggested that Sandi contact Sunrise Opportunity as they are available for such projects. Rob Hood runs the crew from Sunrise. Tom Michaud is the executive director. They are located on Lyon Street.

Two more locations to be planted this fall are the Car Wash and the new General Dollar Store. Sandi and Christina have been in contact with these folks. Gail will contact New Land Nursery regarding available stock and delivery.

Sandi reported that half the grant money has been spent. There is a letter going out to businesses asking if they would like trees planted at their location in the spring. Trees can be ordered from New Land prior to the expiration of the grant to be planted in the spring.

After researching area nurseries, New Land was the closest and best in price. The grant recommended we use a certified nursery which they are.

At the Water Street Parking lot some dead trees were removed. They were placed there as memory trees. Trees were not suitable for the space they occupied. They were replaced with lilac bushes which is tradition memorial planting. In addition, two trees in Ollie Park were planted to replace the two memory trees that had been destroyed.

It was suggested that signs be made for Ollie Park and Norman Nelson Park. These locations should also be added to our historical walk specifically because both places are handicap assessable.

Additional Business: Angela and Christina attended the Maine Development Foundation's downtown meeting. They found there are many resources to help us attract tourists which could be more utilized by us. The Riverwalk should help bring tourists to our area as well as local folks.

Another project underway is the World's Largest American Flag and cemetery by Worcester Wreath Company at their location.

Gail suggested that we consider a few simple, quickly done projects around Machias that are not costly. These could start to make a bigger impact. She cited the cemetery at the old high school lot. Gail had a conversation with resident Larry Johnson about the grave markers which have been buried over time. She has also discussed this with Marcus LiBrizzi who is a local historian working at UMM. It was also suggested that the Machias High School Alumni Association may be interested.

Future Grant: Christina will be submitting a grant in November for rehabilitating the playground at Salem and Grove Street. Under the terms of the grant wood cannot be used as a building material as was suggested at an earlier meeting.

Community Center: Don Ficker came to a previous MRC meeting and suggested a covered walking space. At that meeting many suggestions were made that would have greatly enlarged the scope of the project. Don informed the town that he would like to pursue his original idea independently. He has had meetings on this with the last on September

28th. Several of the committee members get the minutes from his meetings. The town will not pursue a community center now.

It was suggested that the Dog Park be returned to the agenda for discussion.

Airport: There are t-shirts available at Expressions as part of fundraiser to resurface the runway and future projects. Mike Shoppee won the flight.

After saying a heartfelt farewell once again to Rich Bard, a motion to adjourn was made, second and all agreed.

Gail J. Peters