

## Monkton Planning Commission Minutes – June 17, 2014, Approved

The meeting was convened at 7.35 pm.

Those Present from the Planning Commission: Wendy Sue Harper, Thea Gaudette, Lee Mahony, Ivor Hughes (recorded minutes).

Steven Pilcher Select Board Chair was also in attendance along with guests. In all 17 people were present.

1) The meeting was devoted to receiving a presentation by Paul Costello, Executive Director of The Vermont Council on Rural Development on the “Community Visit Program”.

Synopsis of program: *“Vermonters across the state know that local action makes our communities vibrant. But local action often needs support from regional and even federal scales to achieve goals for prosperity. To respond to this need in Vermont, the Vermont Council for Rural development provides local leaders with the resources they need to build capacity for their communities as they look to the future. The **Community Visit Program** is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. The **Community Visit Program** provided at no cost to communities, gets citizens engaged in working for their communities and connects them to the resources they need to be successful.”*

Mr. Costello gave an overview of the program and the process.

- They come to the town with no fixed plan, but a process designed to enable community members to prioritize and choose strategic goals and vision for their community and for the visiting resource team to provide advice and expertise to help them get there.
- They are facilitators
- Aim is to engage a broad mix of community members with the visiting resource team They start by determining what’s going on, what are the opportunities, best ideas, gather up ways the community can move forward.
- Let the community wrestle with what makes the biggest impact on the town then whittle the list of ideas down to three.
- The formation of task groups to work forward on the community goals.
- The process is about 4 months long with three sessions.

The presentation was followed by a Q & A session. Mr. Costello kicked this off by asking “What’s going on in Monkton”.

Several topics and issues were discussed including:

- The Vermont Gas transmission pipeline and its effect on the community.
- No place for community to get together, a town hall had been voted down three times. It was pointed out sometimes a community center can be an activity.
- Town economics, taxes, declining school enrolment but increasing costs.
- Town residents aging, no senior services such as housing, health facilities, and limited meals/shopping.
- Start of Village improvements with Park and Ride.
- Monkton is a service town (dormitory) for the larger surrounding towns.
- How to engage more than usual participants in town affairs such as planning or this process if we were to participate.

It was indicated if we made a successful application for a Community Visit Program and were selected it would probably not occur until 2015

Mr. Costello was thanked for his presentation.

A short discussion was conducted on the “Community Visit Program” to get participants feedback, this was positive. The Planning Commission therefore recommended we make a request to The Vermont Council on Rural Development for the “Community Visit Program”. This will be passed to the Selectboard meeting on the 23 June.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.00 pm. Peter move, Lee seconded the vote was unanimous.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Ivor Hughes