

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
June 7, 2010**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** Deb Billado (Village President); Larry Yandow (Village Vice President); John Lajza, Peter Gustafson. (George Tyler was absent.)  
**ADMINISTRATION:** Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Village President, Deb Billado, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

**2. Presentation by Leadership Champlain Group**

Members of the Leadership Champlain Group were introduced (Matt Plasse with Chittenden Bank, Tammy Shannon with Burlington Free Press, Tanya Noyes with Dynamic Business Solutions, Inc., Tyler Wood with The Vermont Agency, Erika Baldasaro with Opportunities Credit Union, and Maisie Howard with Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger). The Downtown Essex Junction Revitalization Communications Project Report, dated 6/7/10, was provided. The report outlines the research leading to three objectives/recommendations, including: (1) updating the village website, (2) email database and marketing, and (3) assessing social media tools (Facebook, Front Porch Forum). The report also offers cost figures to support the communication tools. Presentation of the findings of the project was made by members of the group and summarized below (the report contains complete information on the group's findings):

*Updating the Village Website*

From March 1 through May 30 there were 5,663 visits to the village website (435 visitors per week). Goals for the updated website include the site being warm, welcoming, and conveying a sense of the village as a place of new ideas and an exciting place to live. The focus should be on individual residences and businesses. The site should have simple, easy menu navigation, and serve the actively engaged audience with a passion for the community. Information for the database can be captured from the website. A facsimile of the updated website and navigation bar was shown as well as the information to be found under each selection and links to social media pages (Front Porch Forum, Facebook). Webpage information is provided on residential, business, government, and events. There is also a 'help' button for questions. Photographs and videos can be posted

and changed with events or the seasons. Burlington Free Press and Webfluency offer website development/support services.

#### *Email Database and Marketing*

Emails to constituents is a way to inform everyone about what is going on in the village. Emailing is cost effective and the database is easy to manage. Emails can be targeted for specific events. Initially it will take time to build a robust database. A dedicated staff member will be needed to craft the emails which should be professional looking and eye catching. The database can be built with a web landing page or through various other means, such as requesting email addresses on sign-in sheets at meetings or events, having a sign up at the library, enclosing a request with tax bills, using existing lists or holding raffles where participants are asked for their email address. Vendors such as Constant Contact or Mailchimp can be used. Both services are easy to use. Constant Contact offers email templates, online surveys, event marketing, and tech support while Mailchimp just offers email marketing service. Each service has a cost structure for number of subscribers and a non-profit discount. Outside companies, such as Vermont Design Works or Burlington Free Press, will provide full database and marketing services at a cost.

#### *Assessing Social Media Tools*

There are presently nine Front Porch Forums in the village and nine in the town. Participation rate is 23%. Newsletters are published daily or every other day. The Trustees and staff members can post to all the forums in the village. More community participation and contribution of high quality content to the newsletters by the Trustees is recommended. The village's Facebook page had 631 fans as of June 6, 2010. The highest participation is by 25-54 year olds. It is recommended the Facebook page be kept current and be used to gather feedback from the community. Comments need to be checked for appropriateness (comments can be 'hidden', but not deleted). Facebook traffic can be directed to the village website. Wordpress can be used to create email digests for areas of the website and these can be sent out (similar to the newsletter on Front Porch Forum).

Matt Plasse summarized the tools and resources are out there so events can be bigger and better for the village. The Trustees confirmed redevelopment of the village webpage is at the top of the priority list.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, that the Board of Trustees go into Executive Session to consider legal matters, contract negotiations, personnel matters, and/or potential budget changes related to personnel issues where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Village at a substantial**

disadvantage, and to invite the Village Manager, staff members, planning commission members, and invited guests to attend. **VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:25 PM.

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

Executive Session was adjourned and the regular meeting reconvened at 9:14 PM.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*