

**Middlesex Town Meeting Solutions Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 9, 2009**

Present: Susan Clark, Ron Krauth, Chris Reilly, Lauri Scharf, Dave Shepard, Greg Whitchurch

**1. Minutes of June 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

Minutes of the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Meeting Solutions Committee (TMSC) meeting were approved.

**2. Place-based Landscape Analysis and Community Education (PLACE)**

The potential for Middlesex to participate in this University of Vermont program was discussed at the June TMSC meeting however no decision as to whether to recommend pursuing this was made at that time. Susan also talked with the Conservation Commission, Planning Commission and Selectboard about PLACE. As a result of the various discussions the conclusion reached was that the timing doesn't seem right for Middlesex to pursue this at the present time.

**3. Front Porch Forum**

Susan presented some information on Front Porch Forum (FPF), which might be described as an electronic community billboard. It is operated as a business and a number of communities in Chittenden County use it, including Burlington. There might be potential for FPF to expand to the central Vermont area if a number of towns were interested. There would be a start-up cost after which it would be self-sustaining through advertising.

One question raised was whether such a program would exclude those without computers. To some extent it likely would, however, even those without computers know people who do have them and information may get passed on from some of those with computers to those who don't have them. A next step would be to follow-up with Montpelier to see if they have any interest. Susan will get some additional information about FPF from a friend who works for FPF. A listserv was also mentioned as a possible means to enhance communication among Middlesex residents.

**4. Middlesex Website**

Tim will likely be able to attend the next meeting where details can be worked out for transferring webmaster duties from Tim to Chris while Tim is away. A couple of questions were posed for consideration:

- Does the website currently have all of the capability the town needs?
- Are there additional things we'd like to be able to do?

Dave asked about the possibility of putting a link on the website to a Google Groups site that has been set up for the Middlesex Town Forest. It seemed like it should be possible; there was a question as to whether the site can be set up to allow anyone to view the site without having to join Google Groups.

### **5. Vermont Community Broadband Project**

There is a possibility for federal grant funds to support broadband access. The Vermont Council on Rural Development is applying for the grant. It is uncertain if any funds would be available to actually expand broadband coverage, a problem in parts of Middlesex. The Council is looking for an initial show of interest that wouldn't be binding once they know if funding will be available. Susan will write to express interest. She will let the Selectboard know about this potential opportunity and ask about their level of interest in applying if money does become available.

### **6. Task List**

The following major task areas were identified for TMSC to be working on:

- Exploration of means of enhancing communication including: FPF, Vermont Community Broadband Project, town listserv etc...
- Preparation for 2010 Town Meeting
- Enhancing the Town Meeting experience at Rumney School

Next Meeting: October 20<sup>th</sup>

Minutes prepared by Dave Shepard

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