



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Noon – 1 PM

June 6, 2024

Present:

Amy Cunningham, Ben Rose, Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup, Eileen Corcoran, Jamie Duggan, Joseph Watson, Katelynn Averyt, Megan Johnson-Saylor, Michele Bailey, Paddy Reagan, Rachel Onuf, Taiga A. Christie

Agenda:

1. Updates from the Steering Committee:

Rachel: Rachel, along with Carolyn, Megan, and Katelynn, attended the first session of a two-part workshop at Dartmouth College with Deborah Howe to thaw and repair diaries from Strafford Historical Society that were damaged in the July 2023 flooding. As part of the workshop, Rachel and Carolyn presented on VACDaRN and its response to the severe weather and flooding in 2023. On June 11, Rachel will attend the “Know Your Neighbor” summit in Plymouth, New Hampshire, and will be speaking on the experience of getting VACDaRN up and running. Rachel attended the Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference in Bellows Falls on June 5. Rachel and Megan are busy planning the VHRP Historical Records Project Prioritization summit which will be held June 25-26. VACDaRN will be represented there by Carolyn, Tom, and Laura.

Jamie: Penn State Architectural Engineering graduate student Lara Maalouf will be in Vermont with two other members of her team. They are working on a research project to understand the recovery process following last year’s floods and the role of local knowledge. They will be using LiDAR (aerial photography) and laser scanning to image Montpelier and Barre Historic Districts. They will also conduct interviews with folks involved in the response. They will be applying for a NASA grant to use satellite imagery to identify things in harm’s way. Lots of neat tools. Jamie will be liaison to connect with folks in Vermont. The project is focusing on Old Labor Hall as a case study. They will be laser scanning the building to learn how to better armor structures such as this more fully; access to power was a big issue with the resiliency of OLH after the July 2023 flooding.

Eileen: Transitioning out of spring and into summer. VHS has an exhibit opening in July, “For the Love of Vermont: The Lyman Orton Collection.” Preparing for the Research and Exhibition Gallery to be opened this fall at the Vermont History Center in Barre. This week is National History Day week. Student winners of Vermont History Day are in Washington, DC.

Joseph: Middlebury College Reunion was held this past weekend; there was a huge crowd to view the open house in Special Collections. Joseph attended Carolyn’s workshop on storage of oversize materials that was held at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Historic Park.

Ben: No VACDaRN updates but is busy getting money out the door for last year’s flooding.

Taiga: Recently posted a large event planning document and has asked for feedback!
<https://vem.vermont.gov/document/large-event-planning-annex> Taiga is working on gathering stories of the flood to create a story slam or performance for the Emergency Management Conference in September. <https://www.faultlineensemble.org/vermont-floods.html>

Michele: Processing cultural facilities grant applications; there are 10 related to heat pumps! Michele provided an update on Weston Theater Company, which was impacted by last year’s storms. Weston Theater performances will all be in the Walker Farm venue as they are not able to get into The Playhouse, their historic theater. They have hired an engineer to evaluate the site. Moving forward, the basement level will not be used for costumes, concessions, etc. They didn’t apply for Public Assistance, so performance space may not be eligible for FEMA funding (Ben). Weston performing group is all volunteers and it has been difficult to coordinate (Christopher).

Amy: Working on Vermont Arts Ahead—2024 strategic planning for VCA.
<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/strategic-plan/> There will be 10 regional meetings around the state and other targeted group meetings. The event safety conversation was held in late April. It was a useful opportunity to share; folks have not had a lot of capacity to plan for event safety. Mike VanArtsen had great expertise and perspective; Katniss’ personal stories were extremely powerful. It has been conference week for VAC! Vermont Flood Recovery Symposium, Downtown Preservation Conference, and Vermont Creative Network Creative Convening—which was packed and overfull with a waiting list of 40 people!

Katellynn: Attended Dartmouth workshop on repairing Strafford’s diaries. Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative will be merging with Museum Conservation Institute—rebranding and renaming coming in the next few months.

Paddy: Waking Windows festival was great and fun. A bomb threat was called in to the festival but was deemed safe. Inspired by Civic Standard and Johnson Community Bakes—Paddy and partner hosting community bakes (pizza) on Tuesdays in July and August (food resilience).

2. Day of Learning Planning Group Update:

The event will be happening at the Barre Elks Lodge and Aldrich Public Library. Main programming will begin at 10am with registration at 9am. Paddy shared the draft schedule that the planning group has been preparing. This will include a keynote speaker, three breakout sessions (including tours of organizations in Barre), lunch, and a closing session. The planning group will continue to meet regularly to identify presenters, finalize the schedule, and work out registration details.