**Partnership Meeting Minutes**

**June 2, 2014**

Tom Wood Town of Saratoga

Jim Brangan LCBP/CVNHP

John Sherman Mayor of Schuylerville

John Hayes Prospect Hill Cemetery Association

Charles Vandrei NYS DEC

Chris DeBolt Washington County Planning

Frank Rooney NYS Ag & Markets

David Bullard The Marshall House

Joe Durkin Rensselaer Land Trust

Andrew Alberti Lakes to Locks Passage

Sara Idleman Town of Greenwich

Julie Stokes Saratoga Plan

Kay Tomasi Senate Appointee

Brit Basinger Saratoga Associates

Tim Holmes Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield

Joe Finan Saratoga N.H.P.

Val Reagan Village of Cambridge

Ken Girardin Office of Senator Marchione

Elizabeth Nostrand Office of Assemblyman Englebright

Tom Richardson, Chair City of Mechanicville

**Introduction**

Tom Richardson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. with greetings and introductions

**May 21, 2014 Subcommittee Meeting with DEC on Procurement for Visitor’s Center**

Following up on the May 21st meeting, Joe Finan reported that the subcommittee met with the DEC to resolve procurement challenges and spoke of the need for someone with contracting authority and knowledge. He noted that while services contracts are available to state entities, and were available to the Partnership for procurement, they are not available for design services, emphasizing the need for a firm for design services and the construction contract – 2 contracts we need to secure. Insofar as the municipality does not have that capability, he cited the need for a fiduciary agent through the DEC. The RFP has been prepared and the contract has been modified to reflect attorney comments. Waiting for boilerplate from the state. Need geo-technical work – foundation requirements. Dante in original report recommended survey. That information will feed into the design. Then an appraisal needs to be done.

Tom Wood mentioned the Town of Saratoga has been sitting on $9 thousand of funds left over from other work. Authorization was obtained at the May 21st meeting to use it for geo-testing and they are moving forward on that for the design phase.

Tom Richardson noted we were fortunate to get a verbal commitment.

Elizabeth Nostrand spoke of the need to contact Jeanne Konz about leasing/licensing.

**Nomination Committee**

Tom Richardson referenced the nomination committee and the need to look at who the officers are. He noted that Tom Wood has been the Chair for the last several years and asked if he would like to continue.

Tom Wood expressed his desire to continue and encouraged the involvement of other committee members, John Sherman and David Doonan.

Tom Richardson noted that appointments will be made in August and asked that if there was interest in being an officer to contact Tom Wood. Further, if anyone wants to be on the nominating committee to also contact Tom.

**Road to the Battle of Bennington**

Kay Tomasi referenced the inaugural celebration of the Road to Bennington interpretive driving tour on June 7th and noted the three venues where the event would take place: the opening ceremony to take place at the Lakes to Locks kiosk in Fort Edward near Lock 6, followed by a bus trip to the battlefield ($25 includes bus trip and lunch), and then at the battlefield participants will be greeted by interpretive guides in period dress recalling the ill-fated story of Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum and the oft-forgotten story of the Battle of Bennington.

Drew Alberti spoke of a brainstorming session between village mayor and deputy mayor regarding the Bennington battlefield and how to get more involvement. Sat down with Gary Brown and pitched idea of an original 18th century beer, and the desire to use Lt. Col. Baum’s recipe to create the original brew. He mentioned a ceremonial tapping of a keg at the battlefield and that subsequently it would be for sale in downtown Troy, on a limited basis, due to the onerous process to brew.

Kay mentioned it will be a fun event and space was still available on the bus. She extended thanks to Drew for all his technology input and bringing heritage tourism into the 21st century with wireless mobile application technology.

Drew said the partnership provided funding for the project from 2009 and it had all been done with volunteers, including the creation of an original score for the event by SUNY Plattsburg.

Kay mentioned a kiosk going in at Stewarts explaining the Sam Hoyt skirmish during the Battle of Bennington, to be located at the corner of 22 & 67. Stewarts donated money for the kiosk.

Drew noted this would be the first weekend of Path Through History.

**June 26, 2014 Meeting with Partnership Community Advisory Group**

Julie Stokes announced the next Community Advisory Group meeting on June 26th dealing with the EPA dredging of the Hudson River. She mentioned re-opening of the old canal and having reached out to EPA regarding what testing had been done. EPA said they would bring maps of where testing was done and what was found in the old canal. This is important because Gary also said the new kayak launch is covered with PCBs. Will have to close site. We need to identify where in flood plains testing is needed at the Community Advisory Group. Partnership can do a presentation on projects in counties. Need a list of who in partnership will be doing presentations. Need to prepare what:

* Projects we want to talk about
* Locations to test flood plains

Saratoga County, at beginning of dredging put out booklet. This is our opportunity to show-off partnership.

Tom Richardson mentioned that booklet was helpful to Mechanicville in receiving grants.

Joe Finan noted that the Stewardship Plan identified some projects (may be stale). Fort Edwards identified projects. We need concepts.

Julie Stokes referenced projects within the next 10-15 years, things you hope for the future.

Tom Richardson suggested putting a meeting together beforehand with Sara, Julie, Joe and Tom to coordinate during the week of the 16th.

Sara Idleman asked if Chris DeBolt would be able to attend and he answered in the affirmative.

Tom Richardson set the meeting for 9:00 a.m. on June 17th, upstairs in the small meeting room.

**Website Update**

Drew Alberti said Lakes to Locks would update the website, citing the partnership’s accomplishments including the Sword Surrender site and Dix Bridge. He announced they would be moving over to a more visual format and would be contacting members to that end.

Tom Richardson noted that a student from Sienna had done a documentary and Drew mentioned it never got into his hands.

Joe Finan said he would try to track it down for him.

**Sword Surrender**

Regarding the Sword Surrender site, Joe Finan spoke of:

* CFA grant application
* Put out letters of support quickly for circulation

He mentioned the Friends group has set up a web site. The bas relief is in Saratoga Springs. $750,000 needs to be raised. Hoping to get it done in two years. He also mentioned the outstanding support from the Chamber and the Friends group.

**Local Heritage Grants**

Jim Brangan spoke about being in the process of identifying emerging issues. Champlain includes seven counties and are looking for ideas from each of the regions. Washington/Saratoga is one region. Looking for broad concepts for next year:

* Local heritage
* Specific projects

This year will continue annual programs:

* International summit (Quebec)
* Small stipend for groups
* Offering wayside exhibit rehab grants
* New programs focusing on Lake Champlain region – want to develop bi-state park
* Updating NY geologic site guide
* Providing water trail grants for communities
* Developing interpretive guide for sustainable agriculture
* Funding for legacy battle of Plattsburg
* Conference in New York for Vermonters and Quebec
* Lake Champlain Maritime Museum to expand rowing program in NY – long boats used for kids

He said they are working on 25 local heritage grants and want local heritage grants that encourage kids to learn about their local heritage and the arts. It’s a great project and we are talking about expanding it next year.

Joe Finan said one component of the visitor’s center is trying to work with the local BOCES. One problem is moving these kids around. Would a grant for busing be something they would entertain?

Jim Brangan said get it on the table. They meet next week.

Joe Finan mentioned the timber harvesting would take place next spring and the raising thereafter, and Jim said it would be great getting the kids out when they are harvesting.

Julie Stokes noted the growth of bike tours in the area stopping at historic sites and the trouble they’ve been having getting funding. She mentioned the Tour de Farm that was done in the past and the need for funding to help with staffing and promotional costs. They bring a lot of people to the area and stop at the battlefield, farmstands – but have had trouble getting funding.

Joe Finan noted ASA has been working with farmers.

Jim Brangan said since they are meeting next Thursday maybe he should send emerging issues document, including harvesting and bike tour, and responded to Joe that would be right in line with natural and cultural heritage.

Tom Richardson asked Jim if there will be an opportunity for the partnership to apply and was told, YES.

Jim Brangan said he would get the emerging issues document to Drew.

**Prospect Hill Cemetery Flooding**

Joe Finan spoke of a meeting at Prospect Hill Cemetery where some infrastructure created flooding on cemetery lands. A plan will be created to mitigate flooding. Design is to fill and channel so it runs along road. Looking for clean fill. Want to give municipalities a heads-up. Get in touch with John at: 695-6907 Work in partnership on landscape issues. Looking for fill. Talk to John about where to place it.

John Hayes said the plan is to make a ditch through the middle.

**Saratoga Plan**

John Sherman mentioned Saratoga Plan with regard to Schuyler House to Village of Victory, and doing loop from American side to Victory Woods. Decided to hire a firm to do permitting. Town of Saratoga will brushhog property with a very old member item.

Joe Finan mentioned they have a crew coming in to do clearing on their side of Victory Woods. The exhibit on Victory Woods speaks of it but it is hard to see. Need a visual cue on Fish Creek to get a sense of how close the battle was. Thanks to Saratoga Plan.

John Sherman said he wants a map from Joe before he retires covering Fort Edward down to the battlefield and back.

Drew Alberti mentioned digital animation of troops.

John Sherman noted they need something on site as well.

Joe Finan suggested there might be an appropriate grant through Lake Champlain

John Sherman observed you can’t figure out where the highlights are in relation to where you are standing.

Joe Finan suggested a number of local waterfront revitalization projects if you are looking for projects.

NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD 10:00 a.m. JUNE 30, 2014 at the Town of Saratoga, Schuyler Room.

Motion was made to adjourn and was seconded.