Moose Mountains Regional Alliance   
Joint Meeting with the Farmington Economic Development Committee  
Siobhan’s Table  
83 Charles Street, Farmington, NH  
Thursday, May 28, 2015

**Present:   
MMRA Members-**Denise Roy-Palmer, Chair   
Susann Foster Brown-Milton   
Colleen Nicastro-Wakefield  
Cynthia Wyatt-Milton  
Kari Lygren-Milton  
Pam Wiggin-Wakefield   
Frank Giebutowski-Wolfeboro   
Kyle Pimental-Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC)   
**Farmington EDC-**Ann Titus, Chair  
Denise Roy-Palmer   
Elaine Aylard   
Resta Detwiler

**Opening Remarks and Introductions:**   
Chairman Roy-Palmer opened the meeting at 6 p.m. with a brief history of Siobhan Magee-Horton’s business achievements leading up to the opening of Siobhan’s Table in Farmington in 2014. She thanked the owner for her donation of the meeting venue and then asked all of the attendees to introduce themselves.  
**Moose Mountain Regional Alliance PowerPoint Presentation:**   
Roy-Palmer narrated a presentation that included a brief overview of the Alliance, its mission and steps moving forward as follows;   
*Why Are We Here?* – To think regionally, to take advantage of the Route 16 artery and travelers en route to the Lakes Region, the White Mountains and North Conway.  
*Route 16 is a Key Component*- Improvements to the Little Bay Bridges in Newington/Dover, addition of a new exit (Exit 10) to provide better access to the tri-city area, additional lanes in each direction in Rochester area.  
*What Does This Mean for the Region?* – Spaulding Turnpike (Route 16) carries 70,000 vehicles per day; projections estimate 94,000 vehicles per day by 2025. Mr. Pimental noted that these figures are Department of Transportation estimates and that the northern communities in the state may not experience increased traffic at this level.  
*The Potential for More Vehicles = Opportunities* – An expected 15% increase in traffic in communities north of Rochester is the equivalent of 1,500 more vehicles per day so the region can expect more vehicles traveling through the area.   
*Route 11 is Another Key Component-* Traffic Count data- Rte. 11 at Farmington/New Durham town line (2006) 9,808 vehicles; (2012) 11,453 vehicles. Traffic count data for Rte.11 at the New Durham/Alton town line showed (2008) 9,433 vehicles; (2011) 8,496 vehicles. Discussion included possible reasons for decreased traffic counts between Farmington and New Durham, improvements to Route 16 which will make it more attractive to tourists with less reliance on Route 93 travelling north, improvements planned for Route 16 bridges, access to the Pease Tradeport, Hampton tolls, shopping malls and the addition of high-speed auto pay at tolls.  
*How Did We Get Started?* Residents in the region got together to promote qualities in their communities, to capture tourism spillover from Rte. 16, to focus on what the region has to attract visitors and partner with Strafford Regional Planning Commission to facilitate local forums with residents, business owners and volunteers.  
*Community Events-* Overview of two events held in Sanbornville at the Tumbledown Café on September 25 and October 23, 2014. The event included an overview of tourism in N.H., a presentation by SRPC and brainstorming by participants. Attendance at the two events was estimated to be about 30 to 40 people at each forum.   
*Moose Mountains Regional Alliance-* The Alliance was created as a result of the two community forums and has a mission that tasks them to provide assistance in promoting and marketing the natural, historic, agricultural, recreational and cultural assets in the region.  
*What Did We Hear at the Community Forums?*  Question One asked attendees how they see their community. Responses included nature and scenic resources, four season recreational opportunities and historic and cultural assets.  
*Question Two*- Asked how tourism could play a role in improving your community. Responses included create more jobs, stronger local businesses, enhance community pride, increased property values and tax revenues.  
 *Question Three*- Asked for ideas for the next steps. Short term answers included establish an Alliance, develop a logo and web site, identify assets, schedule meetings and encourage towns to promote public participation in visioning the future. Intermediate term plans included developing a marketing plan, identify grant opportunities and prioritize infrastructure improvements. Long term steps suggested included implement the marketing plan, finalize the Cotton Valley Trail, creation of an improved bike system and continuous farm to table events.  
*Follow- Up Meeting Schedule*- The meeting schedule shows a list of meetings held in Sanbornville, Wakefield, Union, Brookfield, Farmington and Wolfeboro. The next meeting will be held at the NH Farm Museum in Milton on June 25.  
*The Road Ahead-* Plans to move forward include continue to gather community feedback, complete work on website, launch the website and introduce the Alliance to the media, gain support from the private and government sectors and plan a regional visioning session.  
**Brief Update on MMRA website layout:**Attendees discussed suggestions for items to be included on the MMRA web page. Discussion included places to stay, places to eat, low cost activities for adults and children, scenic and natural assets with  
allowed uses, farm to table events, hiking and snowmobile trails, a cultural events calendar, location of parking and bathrooms and links between the MMRA and the town websites in the region. Mr. Pimental added that he is currently working with Farmington Conservation Commission Chairman Dave Connolly to update the Farmington town maps to include five properties that have been placed in conservation. He suggested those maps could include the location of hiking trails, parking and list allowed uses on those parcels. After some additional discussion consensus showed the members liked the suggested categories on a spreadsheet compiled by Mr. Pimental that listed four main categories- natural and scenic resources, recreational opportunities, restaurants and lodging and local artisan, historic and cultural assets. He suggested that if an events calendar is included it should list as many of the year’s events as possible to eliminate the need to continually update it. The issue will be reviewed further at the June meeting.   
**Fall Events:**Discussion then turned to the fall launch of the website and introduction of MMRA to the public and press. Participants suggested an outdoor kid or family event to kickoff the Alliance introduction. Members determined an optimum time for the event would be between Columbus Day and Thanksgiving to take advantage of weather conditions and avoid competition with holiday events. The members chose a tentative date of October 17th with an alternate date of October 24th for the event. Event ideas included a maze, hay ride, hiking, Kids Festival, Halloween themed and musical activities. A subcommittee was formed to organize the event consisting of the following volunteers: Resta Detwiler, Kari Lygren, Cynthia Wyatt, Pam Wiggin and Colleen Nicastro.    
Mr. Giebutowski suggested one way to get tourists to the area is to promote an event that encompasses the whole region such as an end-to-end bicycle ride. Other attractions and events could be advertised to interest the friends or family members of the ride participants he said.   
**Scenic Byway Update:**Mr. Pimental told the group that Milton and Wakefield were in danger of being removed from list of members of the Branch River Valley Trail Scenic and Cultural Byway Program. He said that although the towns have been active in the program for about 20 years, they joined at a time when there were no guidelines or requirements to belong. New guidelines require member towns to develop a management plan and appoint an advisory committee to remain as members of the program. He asked for volunteers from the two towns to fill out an appointment letter and bring it to their respective Boards of Selectmen and be appointed as a representative to the program. Two participants from each town agreed to become representatives to the program. SRPC members will attend the June MMRA meeting to discuss the Scenic Byway Program he said.  
**Next Meeting:**Chairman Roy-Palmer reminded participants that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the NH Farm Museum in Milton. July and August meetings will be discussed at that time.   
  
**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,   
Kathleen Magoon   
Recording Secretary

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