

Board of Aldermen Committee Minutes

Date: 1/14/15 **Chair:** Davis **Convened:** 6 PM **Adjourned:** 6:30 PM

Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Charter & Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Works <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Intermunicipal <input type="checkbox"/> Special Liquor <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resource
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Committee Members Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Dave Allaire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abby Brodowski <input type="checkbox"/> Gary Donahue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharon Davis <input type="checkbox"/> Tom DePoy <input type="checkbox"/> Melinda Humphrey	<input type="checkbox"/> Jon Kiernan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Larson <input type="checkbox"/> William Notte <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Siliski <input type="checkbox"/> Matt Bloomer
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Others Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dave Allaire <input type="checkbox"/> Abby Brodowski <input type="checkbox"/> Sharon Davis <input type="checkbox"/> Tom DePoy <input type="checkbox"/> Melinda Humphrey <input type="checkbox"/> Jon Kiernan	<input type="checkbox"/> Gary Donahue <input type="checkbox"/> William Notte <input type="checkbox"/> Ed Larson <input type="checkbox"/> Chris Siliski <input type="checkbox"/> Matt Bloomer	<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor Louras <input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer Wilton <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney Romeo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Chris Etter - WFM</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Moppers - DRP</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>WFM Board</i>
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Motions/Discussion *Wonderfeet Kids Museum*

2010- Creature Economy - Public Input

Creation of Museum - Concept tested via

Friday night event and was very successful

with over 300 visitors in 50 hrs.

Located at 17 Center St - space now tight

little location space now being renovated

See as city resource - Economic engine

Fund raising for renovations - young well

Would like City input as to their growth and role

Working with Community Partners - Schools/Recreation/

College - Boy and Girls club etc.

Request for funding from Zonings Act - \$75,000.00. one

time request. approved

40

Sharon Davis - Chair

Investment Opportunities

"Wow" factor

\$10,000
\$ 5,000
\$ 4,000
\$10,000

Signage to make it a multilevel, intergenerational space
Wall Murals
Window Exhibit
Tree House/Adventure Park Exhibit

Exhibit

\$25,000
\$15,000
\$ 6,000

Train Exhibit
Archeological Dig Exhibit
Farm to Market Exhibit

Operations

\$ 5,000/yr
\$30,000/yr

Marketing of Downtown Destination
Lease, Utilities

Programming

\$

Depends on the programming desired

Proposal - \$75,000 for exhibits and "wow" factor

Has raised close to 100,000.00 fund raising to date.

JEAN PIERCE

Myra Peffer

Susanne Engels

Michael Copping

MARTHA RIDEOUT

PAUL GALLO

Gordon Ritschilo

Corie Langone

Wonderfeet

Board of directors

Community Development - 1/14/15

Com Dev. 1/14/15

Vision Statement

To provide a place where families can learn and play together – a destination discovery center that highlights the rich heritage of Vermont while building essential 21st century skills in our youth – especially in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) through interactive exhibits and programs. With a significant focus on interaction between parents/adults and children, the museum creates a unique learning and growth opportunity for both. Rather than focusing on observation, the exhibits engage families in collaborative experiences. As part of the new downtown revitalization energy in Rutland, the vision is to grow into a destination museum that not only meets the needs of the local community, but also to draw seasonal visitors from Killington and neighboring states to downtown, contributing to the overall revitalization and economic growth of Downtown Rutland.

Mission Statement

Wonderfeet Kids' Museum (WKM) encourages children to appreciate their role in local and global communities by creating a dynamic environment which fosters curiosity and exploration, inspires creativity and engages the imagination through play.

Executive Summary

This plan contemplates the expansion of the museum to meet the demands from the local community and out-of-state patrons. This includes moving to a larger space, hiring staff, maintaining regular business hours and expanding exhibits and programs. The accomplishments thus far, using an all-volunteer staff, demonstrate the potential growth for this organization. The Rutland community has demonstrated a strong demand for the services, and has subsequently pledged funding to support expanded operations. In addition, the museum has a talented and dedicated board of directors and a deep commitment from community volunteers, all of whom assist in meeting the demand for the museum's services that is the driving force behind moving the organization to a new level.

The first step to growing this organization is to hire a full-time Executive Director who will be able to devote full time to the mission of the museum. A fully engaged Executive Director will drive the fundraising efforts, initiate more services and expand operating hours. All efforts aimed at creating a more sustainable business. The Executive Director will also build a solid volunteer base and internship program that will contribute to the expansion of museum services offered throughout the community.

In addition to adding full time staff to oversee museum operations, a strategic move to a larger and improved location would allow the WKM to expand services and take on a more significant role in the community. The Board of Directors proposes to relocate the WKM to the Tuttle Building, giving the museum the environment to create an improved "wow" factor that includes new exhibits. The museum has engaged the services of Yoshi Akiyama, the Deputy Director of the Fly Fishing Museum and retired Vice President with Disney, as art director. Yoshi is giving his services at a minimum cost to help the museum create not only an engaging, but also inviting destination venue. These initiatives will create the opportunity to better market the museum to tourists and help generate revenue for the museum and for Downtown Rutland.

The Board of Directors and staff are dedicated to providing services that reach across the socioeconomic spectrum of our community. Besides being a place where families can learn and play together in a rural area where no such venue exists, the museum can create programming that will connect our youth and families in productive endeavors. For example, the WKM will grow its relationship with the Boys and Girls Club to offer afterschool experiences that engage youth in a variety of ways. Both Rutland Regional Medical Center and WIC have also approached the museum about developing healthy living programs for young mothers at risk. The museum has also worked with Project Vision providing hands-on experience at the block party. The board and staff see helping grow a healthy community as a priority of our services.

The possibilities for this growing museum are unlimited. Some of our goals include the following types of programs: science and math focused school fieldtrips, outreach programs to go to schools and early childcare facilities, science and math focused summer day camps, afterschool programs, skill building playgroups, and various themed events. The museum can also enhance the curricula of the schools, and provide opportunities to grow essential twenty-first century skills in our youth through a variety of programming.

Once the Wonderfeet Kids' Museum has been successfully relocated to its expanded quarters in the Tuttle Building in early 2015, the current operations will be solidified and the opportunities for the future are unlimited. At that point, the Museum can begin to explore the "Art of the Possible", and investigate additional new and innovative ways to expand the reach and impact of the WKM on the lives of children and their families for many years to come.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Board of Directors has concluded that the expansion of the Wonderfeet Kid's Museum to a new location and hiring full time staff is not only extremely viable, but a necessary next step in the growth and expansion of the Museum, that is being driven by overwhelming demand.

Over the last year, the Wonderfeet Kids' Museum has seen substantial demand with an average of 35 customers visiting the museum per day. These are remarkable attendance statistics given the absence of any meaningful marketing, an entirely volunteer staff, limited operating hours, and a very constrained and undeveloped facility. Importantly, the 2015 Business Plan conservatively calls for just 24 visitors per day, which is a 32% reduction from actual results achieved in 2014. Furthermore, the 2015 plan allows for extensive marketing that was non-existent in 2014, making the 2015 attendance targets quite conservative.

The museum had 3,918 visitors in 2014, with a substantial number of these visitors being repeat customers. The current penetration into the initial target market of local children is only estimated at 3.1%. 2015 participation projections call for penetration to grow to 4.3%, an increase of only about 1% of the target population, or 297 children. The Board believes that the penetration targets for 2015 are very achievable given the increased marketing planned for 2015 and the fact that seasonal visitors from surrounding states are not factored into the target population.

During a recent holiday period, 75% of the visitors were not Vermont residents. This remarkable statistic represents a tremendous future growth opportunity, since the museum has yet to market to seasonal visitors, indicating that the target population and demand for services may far exceed projections. Clearly, the museum has been offering services enjoyed by the local community – but visitors to the area have also been finding WKM. As museum services expand within the new location, and more visible marketing begins, attendance may be much higher than anticipated.

The museum has received extensive individual and corporate financial support from the Rutland community, with commitments sufficient to support operations through 2015. Critical to the expansion into a new location is the extensive development of new exhibits and displays, creating a "wow" factor to draw in visitors and enhancing the learning experience. Displays and designs have been developed with the assistance of a former design executive from Disney, resulting in a very professional and exciting design for the proposed new facility. Demonstrating the corporate support for the museum, all of the proposed exhibits for operation in 2015 already have commitments for funding.