

## Committee to Promote Swanton

Meeting: 28 Jun 2024 6pm Swanton Village Complex

Members Present: Earl Fournier, Swanton Select Board; Suzie Kelleher, Village Trustee; Heather Lavoie, Historical Society; Darci Benoit, Swanton Enhancement Project; Jessica Hubis, Business Sector

Missing Members: Nicole Draper, Swanton Select Board; Oliver Manning, Planning Commission; Abigael Gaudette, Swanton Arts Council; Chief Brenda Gagne, Abenaki of the Missisquoi.

Heather Lavoie stated she was meeting with Zoe Browksi. The Historical society is currently focusing on fundraising for the repair of the caboose and their social media. Heather stated that they need to update everything and put out publications. She said they are starting at ground zero. She mentioned QR codes for historical sights, this would work with their self-walked historical tour of Swanton, as well as the dam, Barney Mill and monuments in the parks.

Earl stated that the selectboard appropriated some money to put up new town signs. It would be good to get ideas from various groups about what we wanted those to look like. Specifically, a town and village combined logo and some saying a saying of some sort.

Heather suggested the saying "Where community is family" or something thought maybe something in reference to the Abenaki Nation would be fitting.

Suzie mentioned that she was sure that the Beautification was working on the signs and specifically that Joel Clark had been tasked with it as part of SEP. IA discussion was had about sponsors of signs and that the sponsor should be responsible for maintaining the sign and assisting in the planting of flowers or landscaping.

The group discussed having some sort of signage that indicated where business was located. There was conversation about putting it on Grist Mill Hill by the VFW, property owned by the VFW or Mr. McGordy. Heather mentioned that it would be nice if we could put one off the interstate by Maplefield's and Suzie suggested then one on the Village property by the B6 bridge facing traffic, as that the property on the VFW was going to be a mural placed there in partnership with Beautification, the VFW and a local Eagle Scout.

Earl mentioned that the other driving issue was a brochure that we could put together to promote Swanton for the LVRT and the community.

Heather said she wanted to do an e-bike rental at the depot in the parking lot. She said that the younger members of the historical society would be running the museum and making

souvenirs. She thought it would generate income to pay the historical society for the parking lot that they could use to support their projects. Suzie suggested she bring it up to Nicole at Rec to work with them. Darci, Suzie and Heather discussed that the parking lot was small and what could be done to make it a bit larger for parking and the e-bikes. Heather stated that there was tree that required trimming. Earl suggested that maybe Kevin could trim the trees at the historical society. He thought it might be possible that the e-bikes already could be covered by the town, as the museum is under the town's insurance. He stated he would investigate that. It would have to be run through the historical society instead of Heather independently, if that was the case.

Everyone discussed what they would like to see on a trifold brochure that could be placed all along the LVRT, other towns, welcome centers and visitors centers. Everyone agreed that the trifold should be broken out as #1 Welcome to Swanton with photo of something in Swanton #2 Shopping & Food #3 Map of Swanton with numbers to locations #4 Services #5 Recreations #6 Resources, Churches and Food Shelves. Suzie & Darci will do a draft for next meeting

Earl said he thought Adam Paxman had a valid point about hiring a marketing director. He wondered if we could get a couple quotes for a marketing professional. Darci thought it would be costly and that it would be best to save taxpayer dollars to do most of what we could ourselves. Everyone agreed to continue to work amongst us and see about asking a professional to look over our ideas after.

Everyone agreed to put the Operator's manual on the shelf until we get the brochure down complete. To make the manual work it would need to be added to the website and that would require updating. Everyone agreed that we needed a website that had more wow factor. Earl stated that the website does not jump out at me and needs an identity. Suzie showed the group the Enosburgh website, and everyone agreed it had more personality. [enosburghvt.org](http://enosburghvt.org)

Heather wanted to add some quotes from community members about recreating in Swanton to the brochure. On the back page of the trifold.

Earl said that one thought he had was about the two new businesses, some picnic tables in Marble Mill to be able eat. Darci stated she was pretty sure the town or the village had picnic tables that could be added to Marble Mill if they weren't there already. Discussion was had about patio seating and adding sidewalk seating like St. Albans. Suzie stated that Canada streetscape was at least five to six years off. Everyone thought that maybe that could make the VFW side more of a park with long wood planters to separate the parking lot from the grass area. Earl asked if Beautification took care of all the flowers. Suzie stated

that they did. He asked if they would be interested in helping to create a picnic spot of the village property on the VFW side of the B6 bridge. There was discussion about planting flowers, large planting boxes to delineate the picnic area from the parking lot. Darci suggested they should match the boxes on the bridge. All were in agreement that it would be a nice little area but was likely a 2025 or 2026 project. Heather suggested may cement picnic tables or cementing them in.

Earl asked if the Abenaki could do a Kayaking through the river, explaining their history, on a regular basis. He suggested that Suzie and he go together in the next month to talk to Chief Brenda Gagne and get her to come to the next meeting or send a representative.

There was some discussion about McGordy's corner and the VFW. Suzie told them the plans she had heard from Beautification meetings. There was discussion about whether Mr. McGordy would allow a mural to be painted on his brick wall facing the bridge and VFW. Earl will go see Bill McGordy and ask about getting rid of the graffiti tag on his property. Earl asked who the village and town used for the website and what we can do to make changes to the website. There was some conversation about the proposal from Suzie and the discussion she had with Bill Sheets, Village Manager, that changes can be made, but it would be slow changes. Earl wanted to know who we paid for it and who was involved in the creation of it. He stated that he was expecting something that would wow you. Suzie said she would check the warrants and let Earl know who the company they shared payment for the website was.

Darci and Suzie talked about the Chamber working on the downtown mirror of St. Albans downtown. Earl suggested that we show everyone what we want to do with the website. Darci suggested at the next meeting being able to bring up Enosburgh's website and showing the trustees and the selectboard what we're looking at and how we think we can simply change some of the items we already have will adding more. Everyone agreed that a side-by-side comparison of Swanton's webpage to Enosburgh's webpage would help get the point across. Everyone looked at the Troy and North Troy website and agreed that ours was too similar.

Jess suggested that we make the brochure and walking tour interactive with different stamps, like a passport, so that when completed one could win a prize or a coupon. She thought it would be like a scavenger hunt. Darci mentioned Swan Bingo as well.

#### Action Items:

Suzie and Darci will focus pm the trifold brochure between now and next meeting 28 August 6pm, folks can Zoom or come in-person. Suzie would try to secure the complex again.

Suzie would e-mail Hank Lambert to ask for a representative from Beautification for the next meeting.

Earl and Suzie will meet with Chief Brenda Gagne before the 28th of August to discuss Abenaki participation.

Earl will ask about the Historical Society being covered by the Town's insurance and bring up the e-bike idea to the selectboard.

Earl will contact Mr. McGordy about cleaning the graffiti off his building.