



Northeast Kingdom Collaborative  
Join the Conversation

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### Meeting minutes

28 Jan 2005

9-1100 am

Indoor Recreation of Orleans County  
Derby, Vermont

#### Board attendance:

Patricia Sears (Board Chair), Bill McMaster, Joanne Fedele, Paul Denton, Tina Norton

**Absent:** Bonnie Nash, Joel Cope, Sigurd Andersen, Bob Burnham, Rene Rose

**Also in attendance:** Steve Campbell (USDA), John Watson (NEKC Coordinator), Steve Patterson (NEKC Board ex-officio), Chuck Turley (Director, Northcountry Chamber of Commerce), Beth Demers (State of Vermont, Dept of Economic Development), Dave Kestenbaum (University of Vermont Extension Service)

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 0900 am by the Chair.
2. **Approval of Minutes-** Moved to accept by Bill McMaster and seconded by Joanne Fedele. Minutes from Dec 2004 board meeting were unanimously approved.
3. **Treasurer's Report-**
  - a. An overview of monthly and yearly budgets was presented by John Watson, NEK Collaborative Coordinator, for the Treasurer, Bob Burnham. 2004 Expenses were on-track for the fiscal year. All future NEKC invoices will be submitted in time for an end-of-month drawdown of funds by the fiscal agent, NVDA.
4. **Welcome to Indoor Recreation of Orleans County-**
  - a. Shawn Tester, Director of Technology, IROC, welcomed the board to IROC and provided an overview of the function and capabilities of the facility and staff.
5. **Farewell to Paul Denton-**
  - a. In appreciation for the exceptional sustained contribution of time and effort over the past years, the Collaborative Chair, Patricia Sears, presented a framed scenic Vermont photograph taken by fellow Collaborative member Jay Walbert of the Barton Area Chamber of Commerce. Paul always presented the best example of what a volunteer can be.
6. **Roundtable of Hot Topics-**
  - a. Chuck Turley-



- i. Chuck noted the large number of Chambers and inefficient near-lack of communication and coordination throughout the NEK. He expressed some interest in having a NEK-wide meeting of all NEK Chamber membership.
  - ii. Chuck indicated he is eager to revitalize the board of Directors of the NorthCountry Chamber of Commerce. He is also rewriting the Bylaws of the chamber and working with his membership to redefine the Chamber's geographic area.
  - iii. Board meeting of the North Country Chamber of Commerce are at noon, the 3rd Wednesday of every month in room 260 of Newport State Building.
- b. Beth Demers-
- i. A guest of Steve Patterson, Beth indicated she is an Economic Development Specialist, new to the Vermont Department of Economic Development. She indicated her eagerness to get involved in the NEK economic development.
- c. Dave Kestenbaum-
- i. Dave is with the UVM extension service, focusing on an applied project using Vermont tourism data and using the resources at the UVM School of Natural Resources to network opportunities for REAP-based projects in the NEK.
- d. Paul Denton-
- i. Paul is working on an USDA-RD Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and Community Development block grant for his "Creative Economy" project with a deadline of 12 March 2005.
  - ii. He is also seeking funding to sustain Betsy Sylvester's role at the Sustainable Job Fund (the former "Montana" project).
- e. Tina Norton
- i. A new Rotary member, Tina indicated her interest in getting involved in numerous community projects.
  - ii. Tina provided an overview of the Chittenden bank's Downtown Revitalization Loan program (maximum \$100,000/yr, minimum \$10,000/yr at 6.255 interest). This opportunity is open to communities and organizations which can contact Tina for further details.
- f. Joanne Fedele-
- i. North Country Hospital, Newport, was designated a Critical Access Hospital in Dec 2004.



- ii. Joanne reviewed Act 53, which will be state law in Jan 2005. All hospitals will make their utilization data available for public review. This data should prove to be beneficial for healthcare-needs planning. This information will be updated every two years. Further details on Act 53 have been posted on the North Country Hospital website.
- iii. Healthcare concerns for the NEK will be the discussion focus for the NEK Collaborative March 2005 Quarterly membership meeting. Input is welcome.
- g. Steve Patterson-
  - i. Steve noted that property sales at the St Johnsbury industrial park are outstanding.
  - ii. Steve noted several businesses which have expressed interest or are proceeding with locating their business to the NEK.
  - iii. NVDA's regional plan is being revised to incorporate new wording regarding the wind-power issues.
  - iv. Significant effort has been made to relocate several Canadian businesses to the NEK.
  - v. Steve noted that one big issue confronting further development is the lack of depth in the skilled workforce pool in the NEK. In response to a recent announcement seeking 30-40 employees, NVDA only received input from 20 qualified employees.
- h. Steve Campbell-
  - i. Rural Business Enterprise Grant applications are due 12 March 2005.
- i. Bill McMaster-
  - i. Bill indicated that UVM is involved in a marketing study for the Brighton community Forum and also in the process of obtaining cost specifications for the new Welcome Center in Brighton/Island Pond.
  - ii. UVM is also assisting the Town of North Troy by revisiting their development plan.
  - iii. Bill provided an overview of the ex-"Montana" project headed by Betsy Sylvester and the revolving loan fund which will finance technical assistance to start up new businesses within the NEK.

## **7. Coordinator's Report-**

- a. John listed several projects he's leading including the acquisition of funding for new playground equipment for Coventry Village School, the significant expansion of the after school programs at local schools, and his



involvement in the Offender Reentry Program in Newport and at the Northern State Correctional Facility.

- b. No major expenses during the last reporting period.
- c. The 2004 Annual REAP report was submitted to USDA-RD ahead of schedule. Waiting on USDA-RD state input for further posting on the NEKC website.
- d. Several new benchmarks/task were entered and submitted to USDA-RD for approval. New labeling of new benchmarks is in effect (i.e. Community Infrastructure-2005).
- e. John sought guidance on whether to proceed with the application 501(c) 3 designation. Board members unanimously concurred that the application should proceed.
- f. The 2005 NEKC meeting schedule has been posted on the NEKC website.
- g. The addition of a summer high school intern to assist John during summer months has been pursued by the chair and John. Input regarding tasking of this intern is requested to be forwarded to John at your earliest convenience.

#### **8. Committee Report-**

- a. Committee chairs have been tasked to report on their activities at the March 2005 NEKC board meeting.

#### **9. Board Leadership Training-**

- a. Leadership training previously scheduled for this board meeting has been deferred to a later date.

#### **10. Chair's Report-**

- a. The chair indicated that she will continue to update the NEK Collaborative's Work Plan with the Coordinator.
- b. An ambitious project, she also indicated her intent for all select boards in the NEK to be briefed by NEK Collaborative personnel.

#### **11. Meeting adjournment-** Meeting adjourned at 1100.

The Next combined board/quarterly membership meeting of the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative is scheduled for Friday, 11 March 2005 at the Barton Municipal Building, Barton, Vermont. The board meeting will occur from 0800-0915 with the Quarterly Membership Meeting to follow from 0930-1100.

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#### **Respectfully Submitted:**

*John Watson, Executive Coordinator for Joel Cope, Secretary  
Northeast Kingdom Collaborative Board of Directors  
February 7, 2005*