

BI-TOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

December 03, 2015 | 8 a.m.

Wilmington Town Hall | Wilmington, VT

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY BI-TOWN COMMITTEE

Attendees: Jim Barnes, Ken Black, Diane Chapman, Sharon Cunningham, Adam Grinold, Gretchen Havreluk, Ryan Holton, Heidi Taylor, Randy Terk, Pat Weisbrich, Jake White
Also: Meredith Morin, Director of Communications, Hermitage Club

I. Meeting called to order: 8:05 a.m.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2015 meeting was made by Randy and seconded by Heidi. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Bi-Town Marketing Plan Update

A. Report from Sharon

1. Emphasis on blogging for the Deerfield Valley. Bloggers are being solicited to write about activities in the Valley for compensation. Blogs will be posted on the SVDV website
 - i. A list of key activities was generated by Ken
 - ii. Guidelines for authors are being created
 - iii. Several professional bloggers have been identified. Anita Raphael from Wardsboro has just submitted her first article
2. The blogging budget has not been fully utilized, so excess funds will be used for a targeted Facebook blast.
3. Reaching out to Homeowners Associate to network and generate additional blogging activity.

B. Gretchen reported:

1. Centro, a search engine marketing firm has been hired. 100 search words focusing on recreation and food have been chosen.
2. Updates to Selectboards will occur during the next two weeks.

C. Ken added he has contacted Mike Chase regarding blogging.

IV. Valley Trails/Wetlands Update – Jake White

A. Jake met with Zapata Courage from the Department of Environmental Conservation to walk the trail.

1. She provided a variety of good suggestion as to what to do at various points along the trail.
2. Wetlands are an issue. Will trail work generate Act 250 issues?
3. Temporary bridges during the summer could alleviate issues with winter snowmobiling

B. Gretchen raised the issues of the difficulty in dealing with the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

1. Jim noted that the Hermitage Club has hired an Act 250 consultant, Michael Zahner, to act on behalf of the Hermitage Club to ensure permitting and all Act 250 issues are addressed in a timely fashion. Jim volunteered to donate some of Mr. Zahner's time to assist in Valley Trail issues.
2. Jim made a motion to accept the donation in kind from the Hermitage Club to pay for Mr. Zahner's time. Motion seconded by Diane. Approved unanimously.
3. Gretchen also suggested that a letter to the Commissioner of the ANR be drafted by the Bi-Town Committee to list all the issues, roadblocks and delays that have been encountered

in working with the ANR. Jim volunteered his new Director of Communications, Meredith Morin, to do this.

V. Telecommunications – Ken Black

- A. Less than stellar presentation was made by Fairpoint Communications to members of the Bi-Town Committee. Ken sent an email the Beth Fastigge, Fairpoint Communications, State President, VT, indicating that this presentation and the DSL Fairpoint has to offer does not meet the objectives of the Bi-Town Committee. He is trying to generate a conversation about bringing fiber to the home.
- B. Ken had a brief conversation with Cliff Duncan, Duncan Cable (DC) regarding a Woodsman Road project DC is working on to bring fiber to the home. Ken would like to have a more substantive conversation regarding this.
- C. Gretchen indicated Wilmington has been putting pressure on DC for broadband service on Higley Hill Road. She also indication she has had a conversation with Bill LaCour at Sovernet for providing fiber to businesses in the town. Bill said there is a \$3,000 access fee for each building and monthly service costs \$180 per month for up to 30 MB. Bill said he is willing to waive the access fee for a two-year contract.
- D. Randy suggested that Dover should be offering building owners more incentives and exploring a partnership with Sovernet.
- E. Ken added that the VTel Rice Hill tower has yet to go live.

VI. Roads

- A. It was discussed at the last meeting that a letter should be written to the Vermont AOT regarding the sub-standard job the AOT is doing on road maintenance in the Deerfield Valley.
 - a. Sharon volunteered to draft the letter.

VII. Updates:

A. Wilmington

- 1. Downtown Boards from 24 different Village Centers from across the state will be meeting in Wilmington tomorrow (12/4) for their quarterly networking meeting
- 2. Temporary steps for the foot bridge are being installed. Work is being done on constructing a ramp with switchback for better access.
- 3. Memorial Hall has received a grant for insulation from the Vermont Council for the Arts.
- 4. Brite Lites campaign this year will include the outlining of the windows of the Town Office Building with lights.
- 5. All facade improvement funds have been awarded. Projects will continue into next year
- 6. Holiday decorations will be put up on the building across the street.

B. Dover

- 1. **Valley Trail A:** The project has gone out for bid. All bid documents will be at the Dover Town office by the end of this week. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2016.
- 2. **Valley Trail B+ Scoping Study:** This section of the DVT will run from the West Dover Post Office to the Fire House at Stugger Road. A public meeting was held on October 7, 2015. Another public meeting will be scheduled.
- 3. **Valley Trail A Minus** (Dorr Fitch Road to Tollgate Village): Engineering firm is working on foot bridge specifications.
- 4. Economic Development budget was passed by the Dover Selectboard

C. Mount Snow- No Update

D. Hermitage Club

1. Involved in 65 different project that should be completed by Christmas
 - Glassing in decks, lockers, high speed summit lift, mid-mountain cabin (seats 55) to name a few
 - Membership is at 725 with 185 equity memberships
 - Housing sales are good and all condos are sold with deposits on future construction
 - Wetlands mitigation hearing scheduled for December with outcome expected in January

E. SeVEDS

1. Visiting area communities to update on SeVEDS and BDCC activities
2. Meeting with superintendents and counselors to identify the gap between education and employment in a effort to determine what is needed to keep young people from emigrating following high school and college

F. SVDV Chamber of Commerce

1. Resources are being made available to Chamber members
2. Bright Lights map has been created. It is not as extensive as previous years.
3. Invitation will be sent to Bi-Town Committee members to the next Chamber meeting on December 15, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hermitage Clubhouse.

Sharon made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 a.m. Motion seconded by Diane.

VIII. Next meeting: January 7, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Weisbrich

Patricia H. Weisbrich