

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Thursday February 1st 8:00-9:00 am
Wilmington Town Offices

Attendance: Vicki Capitani, John Cleanthes, Adam Grinold, Ryan Holton, Scott Tucker, Eric Durocher, Steve Neratko and Gretchen Havreluk.

Meeting called to order 8:12 am

Vicki moved to approve the January minutes. Adam 2nd. Passed

ACT 250 Permitting update- Continued discussion regarding the Act 250 process. Gretchen will invite Diane Snelling to a special meeting in March for further dialog regarding the issues, with a premeeting occurring prior.

Hiring an Intern- There is a continued need for someone to take minutes, do research for the committee and other related work. BDCC does offer an internship program for such needs, and Steve has discussed potential internship opportunities with the local colleges and universities. It was discussed that an intern through one of the local colleges is a short term fix, will require much turnover, and it's more vital role is to acclimate the student to the role of a position in local government. It may be more appropriate to work with BDCC on an intern that may be able to assist for a longer period than just a semester. The next step is that a job description must be put together. Gretchen to contact a source from Whitingham to take minutes.

Local Purchasing Policy- The board would like to continue exploring the opportunities of a local purchasing policy which was discussed at the December meeting. Such a program would encourage local businesses to purchase supplies from within the community. Adam mentioned that it would be difficult for his business to source all of its needs through the local economy. The discussion focused on how and who would operate such a program, and the Chamber of Commerce was mentioned as a possibility. Further research needs to be completed on what is considered local, what is the threshold of local goods, and what products could be included.

GPS/Google- Google is currently routing traffic to destinations such as Mount Snow, through small dirt roads such as Higley Hill Road, which cannot adequately support the traffic. It was discussed that this occurs due to it being the shortest route. Steve mentioned that he has been looking into it and unsafe routes can be flagged as having an issue, but each system such as Google, Yahoo, Mapquest, Garmin. Steve will send out an email with links to flag issues. Signage options were also discussed, possibly pointing out that the road is a dirt road, or that you are missing our towns and villages.

Amazon 1% Tax- Adam stated that he has received mixed information, but that BDCC is looking into it. The state of Vermont is collecting tax, but no one is sure that it includes the 1% tax. Orders from Amazon only show an estimated tax, and it doesn't break it down into the type of tax. Adam said he would draft a letter to the state Tax Department.

Bi-Town Marketing Plan- The committee is still pushing forward, trying to improve participation in the Dashboard system. So far, only one more business is participating. There was further discussion regarding the addition of real estate data to the dashboard system, but ultimately it was thought that it was too expensive of an idea at this time. The committee is currently focusing on spring and summer events. The Guilford Welcome Center display is currently up. We need to begin thinking about what we would want to focus on for the Fall.

Updates:

Wilmington-Continuing to progress on the East Main Street project. Working to move the fountain on South Main Street to the library lawn. The Small Business Resource Workshop that was held by Wilmington Works on January 23rd was a success and was well attended.

Dover-Recently completed the Town Report, which included Economic Development Priorities for the year. The Do-It renovation program, and the DASP advertising programs are in high demand, and will be expanded for the 2018-19 year. New programs include a business development program for new or expanding businesses and funds for community development programs.

SeVEDS/BDCC- Projects that wish to be included in the CEDS are due by February 16th. Currently engaging the community on a variety of projects. Currently planning to fund a career curriculum counselor, that will be in 4 of the area high schools and will work with the business community to ensure that their needs are being met by the local school system. Putting together a task force for targeted expertise recruitment and retention, to ensure that businesses are targeting the right employees.

Chamber- The Chamber attended the NYC trade show in January, which was attended by over 30,000 people. Current focus is on marketing events throughout the Spring.

Other Business:

The Southern Vermont Housing Summit is being held on February 9th at Bennington College. All are welcome.

Vicki mentioned that not everyone knows about the Minus Zero Festival, and the need for businesses to be open and running for the event. It is generally the beginning of vacation time for businesses and many businesses are not aware.

Adjourned at 9:25 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Neratko