

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

Attendance: Vicki Capitani, Heidi Taylor, Tom Fitzgerald, John Cleanthes, Erik Barnes, Ryan Holton, Scott Tucker, Steve Neratko, and Gretchen Havreluk.

Meeting called to order 8:02 am

Vicki moved to approve the February minutes with the following changes: Eric Durocher was in attendance, not Erik Barnes; Gretchen was to reach out to a person to take minutes at the meetings; Adam Grinold is to draft a letter to the state tax department regarding Amazon 1% Local Option Tax; SeVEDS/BDCC update should be CEDS, not SEDS. Tom 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed

Hiring an Intern- Gretchen reported that Barbara Baum-Rachels would be willing to take minutes at our monthly meetings for \$20 per hour and would take approx. 2 1/2 to 3 hours per month. The cost would be split between Dover and Wilmington. Vicki indicated that it would not be a problem for Dover and Tom was fine with this for Wilmington. Dover would pay through the 1% Local Option Tax Fund and Wilmington would pay out of the Economic Development Line. Gretchen will contact her for the April meeting and a clear job description.

GPS/Google- Steve has done the updates on Google maps, Yahoo, and Mapquest. Heidi spoke with the Marlboro Town Road Supervisor and he is willing to work with us on signage. It was also suggested to put on our business websites to travel the main roadways. Steve is going to contact the VT Dept. of Transportation to discuss signage on Route 9 directing travelers to the ski areas appropriately; stating the safety issues of travelers not familiar with the back roads and causing accidents, should go Route 9 to 100.

Amazon 1% Tax- Adam was not in attendance to provide an update.

ACT 250 Permitting update- Gretchen emailed Diane Snelling to provide us with an update and has not heard back from her. She will follow-up with her.

Housing- Gretchen, Steve and Scott attended the Southern Vermont Housing Summit on February 9<sup>th</sup> at Bennington College. They collectively reported good content of data, examples and funding resources available for potential housing projects. Gretchen suggested a sub-committee be formed from Bi-Town or should towns be working individually on housing. No decision was made. Interesting fact that the average

Windham County 1-bedroom w/ no utilities averages \$800 per month. A video of the summit has been released and linked here:

<https://brattleborodevelopment.com/southern-vermont-housing-summit-video-released/>

Bi-Town Marketing Plan- Gretchen reported that the committee created a display at the Guilford Welcome Center for the month of February. The committee is still pushing forward, trying to improve participation in the Dashboard system. The committee voted to not fund the software update to include real estate market figures. We need to focus on getting businesses entering their data. It was also noted that the businesses that had been inputting their data no longer are. The committee is currently focusing on spring and summer events. We are also working on another 3-year budget to propose to the select board's in the fall.

#### Updates:

Wilmington-Tom reported that there are 24 articles for Town Meeting and a proposed increase on the town tax rate for capital funds; as well as a significant increase in the school tax rate. Gretchen reported that Chamber, Wilmington Works and the ED Staff are coordinating efforts to reach out to businesses that may be affected by the Hermitage Club lay-offs and foreclosure. By collecting data we can aggregate and report to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for potential funding for programs in our valley.

Dover-Vicki reported the Town and school budgets were leveled with no increases. Dover is proposing to provide a bus for students attending Brattleboro Union High School that is direct from Dover to Brattleboro and eliminating funding to the Moover. Steve reported on the 2018-2019 programs and expanding them. He is starting a monthly economic development meeting for residents and businesses to discuss economic issues. Two new businesses, a gallery and a kitchen store opened in Dover this past month.

Mount Snow- Last Saturday the gear box in the Bluebird broke and as of early this morning it is back on line. They are winding down the season in hopes to stay open to April 15<sup>th</sup>. J1 workforce is heading back to their countries. The Minus Zero Festival is on April 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. Construction at Carinthia is going well. Working on an EB-5 offering. They also have several open job positions.

Hermitage Club- Johnny reported they will be opened Saturday and Sundays through April 1<sup>st</sup>. They have confirmed 800 members coming this weekend. The White House is open for lodging but closed for dinner through the remainder of the season. The Hermitage Inn is open on Friday and Saturday evenings for dinner. They are working on an agreement with the members for the ski area, golf course and Hermitage Inn.

SeVEDS/BDCC- Not available

Chamber- Not available

Other Business:

Tom asked about the recent blog of restaurant closings. Gretchen reported that there is a reporter, for the same company that is writing an article on the Deerfield Valley economy. They will be conducting interviews over the next few days in the valley. Scott suggested to work with the marketing committee on spending funds that market us on TV and radio and to develop a similar campaign to the Killington/Rutland area for the energy efficient house giveaway. Gretchen indicated the funds for the Marketing Committee were directed for a digital marketing campaign. She also reported that the Wilmington Works Economic Development Committee is working on a business plan competition that will be marketed nationally.

Adjourned at 8:55 am motion by Vicki and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Erik. So Moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gretchen M Havreluk