

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Thursday April 5, 2018 8:00-9:00 am
Wilmington Town Offices

Attendance: Vicki Capitani, Heidi Taylor, Tom Fitzgerald, Erik Barnes, Eric Durocher, Sharon Cunningham, Scott Tucker, Adam Grinold, Steve Neratko, and Gretchen Havreluk.

Meeting called to order 8:04 am

Tom moved to approve the March minutes, Vicki 2nd. Passed

Officers- The terms for the Chair and Vice Chair positions have been completed. Both Heidi and Erik expressed interest in continuing. The committee will need to vote on these officers at the May meeting.

GPS/Google- Steve gave an update on the process of highlighting issues within the different GPS systems such as Google maps, Yahoo, and Mapquest. Steve reached out to VT Department of Transportation regarding directional signage and they stated that there are two different types of signs. There are the green directional signs that direct to communities and major attractions such as the "Ski Area" signs we have in the area. These signs are placed at the discretion of the Department. There is also the Official Business Directional Sign program, which are the brown signs that direct traffic to specific businesses. This program is only open to legal businesses and there is an application process. They cost \$175 for the first year, and \$100 annually thereafter, and can include a business logo or a standard symbol. After much discussion, the committee determined that a letter should be written to the Vermont Department of Transportation asking for additional green "Ski Area" directional signs to direct traffic along Route's 9 and 100. Steve will put together a letter and send it to the rest of the committee.

Amazon 1% Tax- While the provision is in place for the state to collect 1% tax on certain purchases, Adam explained that there currently is no mechanism for the state to collect those funds from large online retailers such as Amazon and Airbnb. He explained that our Legislators are currently pushing this through the legislative process, but it will take time. Scott stated that it should be a two-pronged approach. One through our Legislators, and two, through the Governor's office. The committee agreed, and Scott stated that he would reach out to Agency of Administration Secretary Susanne Young to request a meeting with the Governor's office to discuss the issue.

ACT 250 Permitting update- Gretchen has reached out to Diane Snelling to set up a meeting regarding the Act 250 permitting process but she is not currently available. There is a possibility that a meeting could be scheduled for May or June and Gretchen will reach back out regarding that possibility. Gretchen also mentioned that the State Legislature is currently working on changes to the Act 250 process and that is currently being worked on at the subcommittee level. They will be seeking testimony as to what businesses have inquired about potential projects but never moved forward due to the Act 250 process or related cost issues. The committee should think about projects that may fit that criteria.

Housing- The committee discussed whether a housing subcommittee of the Bi Town Economic Development Committee should be formed to focus on housing related issues, specifically senior, workforce and affordable housing. The committee agreed that this was an important undertaking and Steve, Heidi and Gretchen expressed interest in being part of the committee. Adam stated that Windham Regional Commission has expressed interest in preparing a housing needs assessment and other related planning work and may have an interest in being part of the subcommittee. Gretchen will reach out to Susan McMahon regarding that possibility.

Bi-Town Marketing Plan- The Marketing Committee will be meeting with both Wilmington and Dover Select Boards at a meeting in May to give a marketing update. The Boards meet on the same day, so it was discussed that it would be the first agenda item at a Wilmington Select Board meeting and one of the last on the Dover agenda for the same day.

Updates:

Wilmington-Tom reported that the Town recently held a workshop prioritizing capital projects, which included looking at the future of the water and sewer systems. Gretchen reported that Congressman Welch was in Town for a meeting and toured Wilmington Works and the Old School Community Center. Infrastructure, and lack of funding for it, was a main topic of conversation. She also reported that the Community Center received a \$20,000 grant from the Vermont Main Street Program to make improvements to the building, including the lobby area. It was also noted that the Town completed the Downtown Designation renewal process, and it was approved.

Dover-Vicki reported that a Medical Marijuana Dispensary has approached the Town regarding the possibility of placing a dispensary within the Town. In response, the Police Chief has asked the Select Board to consider ordinances banning both medical and recreational dispensaries from doing business in Dover. The Select Board would like the voters to weigh in on the subject and a special Town Meeting will take place in June or July. Steve reported that a Town Economic Development meeting was held on

March 27th and will be held every 4th Tuesday at 6:30. Discussion revolved around the 2018-19 budget and potential projects. Mount Snow Academy also presented a project they are looking to move forward on, a trampoline facility.

Mount Snow- Erik reported that Mount Snow is currently focused on preparing for the Minus Zero Festival, and the expected 5,000-8,000 people that will be in attendance. He also reported that it has been a great March, with a lot of snow, and that has really improved the outlook for the season. Currently in the planning process on numerous capital projects, and projects outlined in the Master Plan. Currently planning to be open through April 15th, but the weather may extend that, and reopening for warm weather business beginning Memorial Day weekend.

Hermitage Club- Not available

SeVEDS/BDCC- Adam reported that efforts to fund the program at the various Town Meetings across the County has remained successful. Thirteen communities are currently funding the SeVEDS program. While fund raising is ongoing, recent efforts have raised \$250,000 to fund a career counselor to be located within four local high schools. This five-year program will work closely with businesses and the schools to match up school programs with the type of employment opportunities that are available within the area. Adam also reported that plans are ongoing for the Sophomore Summit, which will bring all Windham County high school sophomore's together to showcase different career paths available within the County.

Chamber- Eric reported that the 2nd annual Chili Stroll was held this past weekend. While attendance was not as big as hoped, it was still a successful event. The Chamber is currently looking at possible changes for next year's event, including changing when the event is held. The current focus is on planning the Spring, Summer and Fall events on the schedule. Eric also reported that there has been an uptick in the return of Chamber members. In the past month, there have been six new members and at least four more that have returned after a hiatus.

Other Business:

The Committee noted that this will be the last meeting for Sharon and thanked her for being part of the committee and her service to the community.

Adjourned at 9:05 am, motion by Sharon and 2nd by Gretchen. So Moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Neratko