

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Thursday September 7th 8:00-9:00 am
Wilmington Town Offices

Attendance: Vicki Capitani, Heidi Taylor, Brendan McGrail, Sharon Cunningham, Scott Tucker, John Cleanthes, Meg Staloff-Wilmington Works Program Coordinator, Meredith Dennes- Hermitage Club Director of Marketing, Meg Streeter, Tom Fitzgerald, Kelly Pawlak, and Steve Neratko

Meeting called to order 8:02 am

Sharon made a motion to approve the April minutes. Brendan 2nd...Passed with one abstention Vickie.

Welcome and Introductions for the newbies.

Meg Streeter provided an update on the Old School Enrichment Center. The committee has been working hard to redevelop the old school for the past 3 years. They have received their non-profit 501c3 status. They are working on an agreement with the Wilmington School District to purchase the building valued at \$700+K for \$1. There are currently two tenants. The annual cost to manage the building including insurance is \$85K-\$135K. The committee has begun fundraising, applying for grants/loans and actively looking for tenants. The Twin Valley Middle/High School will be renting the fields and gymnasium. The building is used pretty much daily by community recreational groups and the School District. Mark Dooley Race will be held in a few weeks and working on being the site for the Memorial. Please contact Meg or one of the committee members if you would like more information.

Meg Staloff, Wilmington Works Program Coordinator provided an update on downtown projects. Meg came on board in May and has been working to meet all the downtown business owners and community. She has also worked on the summer events and been working on the website and newsletter with an intern they had over the summer through the BDCC. Her mission has been to help businesses improve the economy. A proposed new zoning district that includes Beaver and Church Street that can be included in the downtown designation is currently scheduled for a final select board hearing on October 2nd. If the new district is approved by the downtown board this could help the Old School project, commercial properties and create sidewalks for safer walking. The Downtown 5- Year Renewal Application is due to the state in March. Please feel free to reach out to Meg if you have ideas or need assistance.

The committee discussed changing the meeting time of the Bi-Town Economic Development Committee and was decided to keep as is on the first Thursday at 8 am

and to make everyone aware that we can use a call-in feature when needed with advanced notice. On a similar topic, Gretchen related the difficulty for the economic development representatives from each town taking minutes and being able to actively participate. Vicki suggested paying someone to come in take minutes and split the cost between the towns which would be about 3 hours per month. BDCC has the internship program and Wilmington Works might be able to help. Vicki also suggested using spot writers from Marlboro College; this has worked well at the Deerfield Valley News. Steve has reached out to BDCC for an intern in Dover which may be another option. Vicki and Steve will report in next month on these options.

ACT 250 Permitting update- Gretchen reported that she has not heard back from Diane Snelling since early June regarding the ACT 250 Commission appointments by the Governor and the 5-year analysis of processing times for the state. She will reach out to her again.

Bi-Town Marketing Plan- Reports showed a good response throughout the summer with most clicks being on Independence Day information, hiking, lodging, swimming, boating, and jet ski topics. Was noted that having the traffic report would be good to have for reporting to the select boards in October.

Valley Trail Update- Nothing to report

Dover Trail (Dover Area Recreational Trails)- Kelly reported they are a sub-committee of the Dover Select Board. Have been meeting and accomplished 2 trail days with 17 people attending on one day and 2 people the other; however, the second date was not advertised well. Attendees are very passionate about their work. A scoping day is planned for the next meeting. Working on owner permission slips. New wayfinding signage and looking for outside grants are other projects. Marketing is a challenge and need to educate hospitality employees on available trail systems. The goal is to connect all the developments in the Mount Snow area to the Valley Trail. If you are not on the distribution list and would like to be let Kelly know and she will add you.

Updates:

Wilmington- Tom reported they have hired a new town manager, budget season is upon them and cut-off date is today for the auction of the vacant buildings in downtown. On Tuesday Sept 26th at 6 pm at the Wilmington Town Offices is holding an educational session on Open Meeting Law and Public Records all are welcome to attend.

Dover - Vicki reported the select board is now filling the gap with the absence of Randy Terk, former Select Board Chair and the new Economic Development Specialist,

Steve. Steve reported that he started his position 7 weeks ago and has met with a number of businesses, agencies and organizations. Businesses are looking to expand and grow. Will be working on Infrastructure for needs of amenities and marketing. Working with Mount Snow on a skate park; as well as other opportunities for summer recreation amenities. Working on the Economic Development budget for next year. The Do It Program has been very successful this year and 6 entities took advantage of the Advertising Program.

Vicki mentioned a lot of businesses are looking for employees and will negatively impact our economy long term. Ideas about a youth hostel and tiny home communities like what Aspen has implemented were discussed. Gretchen reported that this committee did have a sub-committee for workforce development however, committee members were not attending meetings. Suggested to invite VT Dept. of Labor to attend a Bi-Town meeting.

Mount Snow – Building IT!

Hermitage Club- Nothing to report except on a side note...9am today the World Cup tickets go on sale for the November event in Killington

SeVEDS- No update available

Chamber- Wine and Harvest Festival is in a few weeks with a new sponsor and were able to do a digital bill board in CT. Ticket sales are up! This is the biggest fundraiser for the chamber. We have three open board positions available. Membership notices and ballots will be going out this week.

Noted that the Adventure Challenge brings people to the Valley and a great way for visitors to explore our area. Unfortunately, Wilmington will not be a part of this for next year, due to several negative mishaps. Better communication with the businesses and the vendor will be key for next year.

Other Business: None

Adjourned at 9:04 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Gretchen M. Havreduk