

**Bi-Town Economic Development Committee**  
**Thursday, December 6, 2018**

**Attendees:** Vickie Capitani, Gretchen Havreluk, Tom Fitzgerald, Eric Durocher, Eric Barnes, Ryan Holton. **In addition:** Lauren Harkawik, Scott Tucker

**Meeting called to order:** Gretchen called the meeting to order at 8:00am  
Minutes of October 4, 2018, tabled pending quorum.

**No Act 250 update.**

**Valley Trail Update:** Gretchen reported that the valley trail had been walked during the summer. Areas were considered for re-routing the trail to provide better access and were mapped in conjunction with the Windham Regional Commission. The next step was to have Brendan Ryan perform the cost analysis for scope of work. No Act 250 Update. According to a representative from the ANR, the Governor intends to put forward legislation with an exemption for trails. Eric Barnes noted that if no more than one section of trail was disturbed at a time, Act 205 would not be required. Eric Durocher will have Ryan's report for next meeting.

**Housing Bi-town:** Committee members met with Elizabeth Bridgewater of the Windham/Windsor Housing ) and discussed hostels, creating an organization that connects seasonal workers with people who want to rent a room in their homes. A Municipal Planning Grant is expected to fund housing analysis: current inventory including vacant properties that would work for hostels in Deerfield Valley, needs, implementation plan. Vickie addressed how to access what money could be used locally. Mount Snow pays state housing board for housing and employees and those funds may go to other communities. Eric B wants to be able to invest some of that money here.

**Bi-town marketing;** Committee created a budget and presented to selectboard 2 weeks ago. Board created a policy in 2016 on spending funds from local option tax for one year can only be up to 20%, Bi-town proposed another 3 years of a marketing campaign with two options and will be on Dover's selectboard agenda for the 18<sup>th</sup>. Eric said the digital marketing campaign is more than it was 3 years ago but tourism budget is only 2 million for the entire state, most of which is spent in the Burlington area. Tracking mechanisms were discussed: Google analytics of sales tax, and room and meals tax, as well as social media. Eric said the Chamber is working with organizations to attract people into the valley. Foot traffic this year is down from last year because the 2017 Adventure Challenge was very successful. If every business participates in the new program, demographics can

be tracked. Gretchen noted one tracking mechanism: the Wilmington public wifi picks up phones logging in.

**Bi-town committee members:** Vickie noted the difficulty in have a quorum with 12 members. Bi-town will make recommendations to selectboards should a vacancy occur. Ryan said we're short a member and the Hermitage Club is not a working concern. Gretchen: in other boards, people are invited to several meetings to see how they fit and how the board responds to that person; an appropriate way to go about new members. Eric B suggested inviting Dover selectboard members to see how Bi-Town works. Eric D: in our charter it should state, miss 3 meetings and you're out. Discussion of charter: BDCC needs to appoint someone to come to the meetings. Vickie: it creates a problem when people don't show up. Vickie will draft charter on possible changes to membership. Hermitage would be welcome back if they re-open.

**Vtrans signage:** Steve Neratko was not present to discuss; Eric D suggested appoint someone to assist; ED will help and reach out to Steve.

### **Updates**

Wilmington: Tom working on townbudget; med ins.will save 50 thousand; pushing to ban the use of plastic bags; state has not done anything; Shaws, Rite Aid, and Dollar Store is prepared; Tom said landfill is choked with plastic; Eric D paper is a bigger cost than plastic. Ripple of complaint. Tax stabilization will be voted on at town meeting; sidewalk project will go into construction this spring; developing town water/wastewater MOU to bring other residents and facilities such as Health Center and Honora building on line.

**Dover:** Request for proposal: trails assessments and needs; create a master plan; gearing up for re-appraisal in 3 years, town match state 30K per year.

**Mount Snow:** Peak Resorts (owner) strong company doing well: Carinthia is open; new base lodge will open on 12/22; grand opening in January; so far well received. Last two weekends have seen unbelievable traffic.

**Sveds;** no update.

**Chamber:** Eric B noted upcoming 12/7 gala; yesterday launched survey asking members and others what the chamber is doing; what can be improved; new ideas. Eric will work with his board on results; may use incentives (win a gift card); looking for new initiatives.

Next meeting: January 10 at Wilmington Town Office

Meeting adjourned at 9:19.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Donaghue

