

**Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Town Office
Thursday, March 5, 2020**

Members present: Gretchen Havrelek, Tom Fitzgerald, Vicki Capitani, Christy Betit (for BDCC), Ashley Perlmutter (for Mount Snow), Steve Neratko, Vice Chair Eric Durocher

Also present: Lauren Harkawik, Mike Tuller, Maggie Lewis, Shannon Wheeler

Meeting called to order at 8:04 am by Eric

- I. Additions or changes to the agenda:
 - a. Gretchen: other business: let's discuss Deerfield Valley Broadband Group
- II. Approve minutes September and November meetings
 - a. Motion by Tom to approve September minutes. Vicki seconds. Ayes have it, Gretchen abstains.
 - b. Motion by Tom to approve November minutes. Gretchen seconds. Ayes have it with the following corrections under Other Business item B:
 - i. 'sure packing' not shore packing.
 - ii. More funding requested not by letter writing but Gretchen submitted application request to Vermont Department of Parks and Recreation.
- III. Housing Committee:
 - a. Have organized into subcommittees. One is reaching out to Mount Snow on housing issues and other things. There is a zoning ordinance committee which includes registration of Air BnBs, a shared housing committee and one to seek developers.
 - b. The action items are overwhelming within the analysis. We're taking the low hanging fruit right now and kind of working with that. We might need more assistance and more help with how to go about that. We're not clear on how to proceed with that. Yes, no money and all volunteers. We're an older group in general. We have a lot of members but most have not worked closely with government.
 - c. Working on low hanging items so we can get wins while also keeping an eye on large items like finding a developer. We're going to need incentives to entice them to come whether they be financial or giving land to use. I don't think we're going to get help from the State so we're going to have to come up with things to use.
 - d. One of the smaller projects would be an incentive or test program for the accessory unit/one apartment as there's not much permitting required. It would need to be a long term rental to qualify for any program created.
 - e. Tom: There's no restriction or registration for Air BnBs is there? I'm seeing other communities do this.
 - i. Vicki: No, and I think it's really important for safety to do that. We're seeing some places that may not be up to date. All it takes is one tragedy and everyone would want to know how that could have happened.
 - ii. Gretchen: it comes back to long term rentals. We don't have a registration for that and I think we should. (Vicki: I think we feel like we sort of have a handle on that since they've all been doing it for a while). But are they being inspected? And up to date?
 - iii. Vicki/Tom: I don't think we do any inspections unless there's a complaint? (Mike Tuller: yes)
- IV. Marketing Committee:
 - a. Summer campaign presentation to show. [see attached presentation]
 - b. Eric: there was some animation involved with these they weren't just static ads.
 - c. Vicki: I can tell that Dover will ask why Wilmington is first.

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- d. Maggie: where is Trampoline out of? Glens Falls, NY/Albany area. Gretchen: what was really helpful was Mount Snow was already working with them. We did go through an RFP process and had people from Michigan, Georgia apply.
- e. Marketing subcommittee members are just Gretchen, Steve, Shannon and Eric. We did lose Thad from Mount Snow. Tim Dolan will join us for our next meeting to replace the Mount Snow piece.
- f. Impressions shown in presentation are specific to the ads shown.
- g. Budgeting: 72% was spent directly on the ads. 28% was creative and other operational costs.
- h. Targeting: main pieces recommended by Trampoline were maing Boston and surrounding area as well as NYC and CT. Trying to hit those people that are going to make the trip. Looking for those over 25 with expendable income.
- i. Results: 17.6 million impressions compared to 3.4 million last year.
- j. 159 days in market compared to only 52 last year. That's attributed to working with Trampoline – they were very streamlined, and we were able to get it out to market.
- k. Vicki: it looks like the same amount of impressions per day if you do the math. Why are the clicks diminished? Eric: let's ask Trampoline why. Steve: we targeted differently. If we were focusing more locally like in past years, they may click more. We focused further out so we got more impressions but less clicks. Gretchen: we did not have local ads at all in 2018 and 2019. Steve: This year we focused exclusively on those larger markets. In past it was Western MA and closer. Eric will reach out to Trampoline to see if it's a market shift ot what it is that affected the amount of clicks and see what they have to say.
- l. Rooms & Meals tax – this is why the presentation is so delayed. Data from state delayed a quarter plus a month. Valley combined Q2 results there is a decline. No alcohol tax listed for Dover often. This may be why a decline is shown.
- m. Thad set us up with Air DNA for Air BnB and Homeaway data. We're able to acquire this info for the last few years and there's definitely and uptick. There's a correlation between what's been available and the occupancy so it's good to see they're being occupied but the number of which has grown immensely. Many of the smaller inns were unavailable so that likely contributes to this as well.
- n. 1884 summer guests for the combined Valley in 2019. Vicki: I think you can see that in the valley. It was quieter last year. This winter seems busy. But there was nothing out of the ordinary happening at the mountain and that's big.
- o. Recommendations – we are looking for \$108,500 which is an increase – the \$2000 the state was giving was in turn for equal representation. We decided it wasn't worth that and countered with 15 days of a peak time during the campaign but they declined.
- p. Eric: the state is trying to increase tourism budget by \$500,000 but we shouldn't expect any of that money to reach us here. We're looking at this as we need to help ourselves and that we won't get the support we need at the state level. We're recommending no new creative this year. We like what we have and let's put the majority of our money putting it into market. Our overall goal is to have as much data as possible. We want a better idea of what the ROI is on a campaign like this.
- q. Other recommendation is to take remaining \$25,000 and put out an RFP for a destination marketing consultant. Someone that can take a look at what we're doing. Someone that works with resort towns and can tell us where the money we're spending makes sense and what we could be doing differently. This began with Thad – none of us are marketing experts. We need to bring in a professional that can help us plan for the next 10-15 years of how we spend, who

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will be responsible for different marketing aspects and develop real metrics. From pixels to trail counters. Real info on how our money is being spent and how it's affecting our community. At the same time, Thad was adamant Vail does have assistance available but we have to have the metrics in place first or they won't support. We've talked about how we can tap into the Vail community dollars. This is a real opportunity to do that.

- r. Comments on campaign: This is one of the better marketing programs I've sat through. Working with all the organizations in town helped. Trampoline was a game changer. The creative is really nice. I think it's a great message.
- s. Need 45 minutes to an hour for a joint selectboard meeting to present after tidying up the presentation. Vicki suggests March 31st and that Dover will travel to Wilmington for 6pm.

V. VTrans Signs/Marlboro Selectboard:

- a. Steve: Continuing to reach out to Mike Flynn; did get an assistant and sent her all the information. They recommended this group and our two selectboards have a resolution stating we want these signs in place and supposedly they will take us seriously with that.
- b. Gretchen: I think we should include Marlboro. Vice Chair Jesse Krietze was going to attend today. They are very interested as well. I think if we all create the same resolution and work off of that it would be great. Steve offers to put the resolution together

VI. Other Business:

- a. Deerfield Valley Broadband Group has been meeting in Whitingham for the most part. Most of the area communities are working towards this. We're talking about forming a CUD. It was on Wilmington and Whitingham Town Meeting Days as articles and passed in all local areas with it. Believe we're moving forward we need to do the housekeeping of creating that district. We're also working with Windham Regional Commission who has a grant and part of that process has been the survey out there.

VII. Wilmington updates:

- a. Tom: Town meeting this week had everything pass except appointing town clerk vs electing. No one questioned any line item on the budget. Big issue was soliciting \$221,000 for the proposed fire/police department. Fairly uneventful meeting. Ann Manwaring has retired; we have a new board member Mark O'Maley and have our reorganization meeting on the 10th.
- b. Gretchen: Sitzmark has reopened. Carquest will be going in next to Shaws. East Main St sidewalk project went to DRB. Hoping that will pass and will be in for construction this summer. Hermitage auction still scheduled for March 20 at this point.

VIII. Dover updates:

- a. Vicki: Everything that was warned went through on Town Meeting Day. Only thing voted down was an amendment for MCHA which did not request funding this year. Everything went through fairly quickly. We broke out the library budget for the first time. There was discussion which I thought was good. Steve's last day is March 31st; work session on where we go from here on that soon. Board committed to making two person department from this point forward.
- b. Steve: Our first signage improvement program application coming in next Select board meeting. Trails plan is coming along. Shannon will be going to Dover School to get the youth vote. Hoping the final plan is done in the next couple of months.

IX. Mount Snow updates:

- a. Ashley: Capital budget of 2.3 million approved from Vail. Projects all in but not yet approved or appointed; waiting to see what we can do. Visitations are the same as last year. Integration to start May 1.

X. SeVeds updates:

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- a. Christy: Each Town Meeting request we made we were funded – 15 towns. Great opportunity to be out talking to people and nice to hear what they're concerned about. Workforce development programs and sophomore summit is upcoming. Reality fair coming up: kids identify careers they're interested in they'll get a paycheck and they have to go around and pay for things and if you don't have money leftover you have to go see 'Craig' from Craigslist and get a side hustle. They must spin the wheel of fortune. Sometimes you get a flat tire and sometimes a bonus. It gives them a sense of reality for the future. This is May 8th and a full day activity if you know any employers that would like to be there or can volunteer – we will need many.
- b. Gretchen: BDCC sponsored ski to stay a couple of weeks ago. There were 8 couples total there. Couples from Hawaii, Seattle, Atlanta and the Bostons and New Yorks which you predict. This was much more successful than previous years. The Seattle couple met with a realtor the next day. The Hawaii couple toured for the whole week. Coffee time was not as successful as people had to leave. There was some representation from employers as well.

XI. Chamber updates:

- a. Eric: We're through the chili event. Ramping up on collecting ads and things for visitors. Summer/Fall guide edition. Concerted effort to make changes to website user friendly and update listings and removing old businesses. New Harvest festival and Blueberry websites coming.

XII. Other comments:

- a. Maggie Lewis: met with Census representative Tom yesterday. Having an open house on 4/7 from 8-4:30 to have people come in and fill out their census at Gathering Place with entertainment and cake. We invite all in Deerfield Valley to participate.

XIII. Next meeting April 2nd.

XIV. Motion to adjourn by Gretchen at 9:23 am, seconded by Ashley.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economist Development Assistant, Town of Dover