

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
via Zoom
Thursday, November 5, 2020

Members present: Gretchen Havreluk, Vicki Capitani, Eric Durocher, Heidi Taylor, Tom Fitzgerald, Adam Grinold, Tracy Bartels, Bill Benneyan

Also present: Shannon Wheeler, Lauren Harkawik, Phil Edelstein, Cheryl LaFlamme, Jessica Lee Smith

Meeting called to order at 8:02 am

- I. Additions or changes to the agenda: *None*
- II. Approve minutes from the October 3rd meeting
 - a. Motion to approve by Gretchen, seconded by Tracy. All approve
- III. Deerfield Valley resiliency team
 - a. Gretchen: Not meeting as frequently. Still sending out info as it comes in – Eric to Dover and Meg at Wilmington works for Wilmington. Everyone Eats program happening. Some participating restaurants have dropped out after being told it was duplication of benefits. Adam clarified that is no longer the case, someone will contact North Star and let them know.
 - b. Eric: All gift certificates have been purchased from local businesses for Stay and Play and the landing page is set up. Most packages have been delivered to Inns/Lodges. Reporting back to state by end of the month for this Restart VT grant program.
- IV. Hermitage Club updates: (moved up before Bill's departure)
 - a. All lifts are almost completely serviced and ready to operate Thanksgiving weekend, weather permitting. Snowmaking compressor tests coming Saturday. Biggest challenge as it is with Mount Snow is labor. Really trying to find good team members and our rates reflect that. About halfway to 150 total positions for the season. Looking for a record 75 days of operation this year. Feeling the community support which has been helpful in getting ready to open.
- V. Our Growing Communities – Zoning
 - a. Gretchen: No new updates in Dover. Wilmington Planning Commission has been meeting monthly and having good conversations about making changes.
 - b. Cheryl (chair of Wilmington Planning Commission): We meet twice a month and have spent last 4 meetings talking about housing and how to improve accessibility. It is a fairly long road and we have options on how best to do it.
- VI. Housing Committee:
 - a. Haven't met, working on sample agenda for end of this month.
- VII. Marketing Committee:
 - a. Charrette has been holding interviews with stakeholders for marketing plan. They should be done by January.
- VIII. Chamber Update:
 - a. Adam: in partnership with Chamber we have another round of grant applications for them. Helping with some press around updates and the new hire. Board is coming together and supporting the hiring of a director and ensuring operations continue.
 - b. Gretchen: they hired Ethan Schoonmaker. He is working M/W/Th and will be invited to join us next month.
- IX. VTrans Signs:
 - a. Sign is up; not worded as hoped. Reviewing where we left off with VTrans: getting language together on how to share directions on websites. Tracy and Gretchen will work on this. Signage on town roadways: Eric will cover Newfane and Dover; Heidi will speak to Marlboro; Gretchen to Wilmington for Higley Hill and Lake Raponda Rd. All will report back next month.

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X. Wilmington updates:

- a. Tom: We have gone through reappraisal and have a few differences with state. Fiber going on back side of Stowe Hill by Duncan Cable. Received a grant for election related expenses, Therese did an outstanding job on her first election. Water district vote and the results will go on to states office/legislature. July 1 merger official if all goes well. The public service building has gone to DRB and we are awaiting their report.
- b. Gretchen: Have been working with Aldrich & Elliott on a water & sewer extension project on Route 9 to Ballou Hill. Have received a draft report and the final should be coming out soon. Next steps are informing property owners and Selectboard and then looking for funding options – project estimated around 3 million dollars.

XI. Dover updates:

- a. Vicki: Town Meeting options on our agenda for Tuesday night. Discussions on Wilmington's recent decision and plans for logistics of preTown meeting information sessions.
- b. Eric: sending out RFP for town website rebuild. Rekindled conversations with BDCC for revolving loan program for Dover businesses. Received an agreement in principle with landowner to move onto the next section of Valley Trail.

XII. Mount Snow updates:

- a. Snow guns ran at the top last week and we're watching the forecast. Planned to open next week but all weather dependent. The state released their ski area guidance and we've been working hard to dive into that. The way we and other ski areas approach it might be slightly different but we're committed to keeping everyone safe. Very important is the shared responsibility of travelers to adhere to the state's travel guidance. We're doing a lot of emails to passholders and sharing on social media to let people know what to expect. People need to follow the signage and directives. There will be changes in the lodges, lift mazes and ticket windows to maintain distancing.
- b. Eric: would it be possible to have another call with local businesses so we can answer the questions I'm getting? Tracy will work with Jamie Storrs to set it up and get back to Eric.

XIII. BDCC Updates:

- a. Technical grant program has been fully subscribed. 250 businesses throughout state will be a part of this. We'll know in next day or two if there will be additional funds for this grant.

XIV. Other Business:

- a. Gretchen: Walgreens: Spoke with the manager who referred me to an 800 number and it's taken the last 4 weeks to get to someone and now I'm not getting a response. Scott also wrote a letter. We've requested conversations and we're working on it.
- b. Eric: Dover has been working on this as well. Laura Sabilia's recommendation was we draft a letter and share with surrounding towns to add a little weight to it. Then share to Walgreens and to the Attorney General if we don't get the response we're looking for. Have looked at the possibility of a small local pharmacy meeting needs.

XV. Next meeting December 3rd.

XVI. Motion to adjourn by Eric at 8:51 am, seconded by Gretchen.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economic Development, Town of Dover