

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
via Zoom
Thursday, December 3, 2020

Members present: Gretchen Havreluk, Vicki Capitani, Eric Durocher, Heidi Taylor, Tracy Bartels, Ethan Schoonmaker

Also present: Shannon Wheeler, Scott Tucker, Jessica Lee Smith, Christine Howe

Meeting called to order at 8:04 am

- I. Additions or changes to the agenda: *Remove chamber agenda item as Ethan can now give updates*
- II. Approve minutes from the November 5th meeting
 - a. Motion to approve by Gretchen, seconded by Tracy. All approve.
- III. Deerfield Valley resiliency team
 - a. Some funding left from the sector webinars, we're hoping to use it for microgrants like BDCC technical assistance program to offer one on one assistance to these businesses. Still planning on offering webinars like Instagram specific but attendance was dwindling with Zooms and an hour or two of consulting might be more beneficial to businesses.
 - b. Continuing to send out resources to businesses. ESSL is launching for Winter, both Dover and Wilmington businesses signed up. Welcome Wagon has sent out 92 postcards and held a virtual happy hour with another planned. Stay and Play packages are distributed, financial reporting to state complete and metric reporting due end of month.
- IV. Our Growing Communities – Zoning
 - a. Nothing new in Wilmington. Dover's Planning Commission vacancies are being advertised this week.
- V. Housing Committee:
 - a. Received 6 out of 13 responses for a meeting next week. Looking like Wednesday at 3.
- VI. Marketing Committee:
 - a. Met with Charette again on the marketing plan and in depth comp set study they completed. Final meeting with them 12/16 and hoping to do a full meeting with both Selectboards in January for presentation. Comp areas they studied were White Mountains of NH, Stowe, VermontVacation.com, Berkshires, Discover New England (all NE states except Vermont), Woodstock, Newport RI, Bar Harbor & Acadia, Maine, Portsmouth, NH, and Connecticut.
- VII. Other Business:
 - a. VTrans signs:
 - i. Tracy and Gretchen updated language and sent out to committee. Mount Snow website has been updated to reflect. Ethan is updating the Chamber website and putting in Monday's newsletter.
 - b. Walgreens:
 - i. Gretchen hasn't heard back from State contact but did hear through grapevine that the pharmacist they hired came into the store for 1 day before taking another non Walgreens job in Brattleboro. Heidi spoke with someone in Bennington and they are having similar problems with Walgreens there.
 - ii. Grace Cottage pharmacy has picked up a lot of local business and is trying to take care of all paperwork for anyone that wants to switch.
- VIII. Wilmington updates:
 - a. Scott: in midst of water district merger, everything with Secretary of State and anticipate it waiting at legislature when they return January. Entire process should be complete for July 1st.

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We have completed the design phase of the proposed public safety building. Site visit with general construction firms Friday. Bid openings on Christmas Eve morning.

- b. Gretchen: working on LGER grant with State hoping to turn the April disaster resiliency revolving loans we gave into grants for businesses if approved. It's very involved.

IX. Dover updates:

- a. Vicki: We're in budget season. Thinking about Town Meeting and what to do with it, tax department announcement that education tax is going up 9% yesterday making budgeting even more difficult. A bad economy and all our lodge owners – this is bad news for everybody. It's tough and I want to thank our Economic Development department for procuring some grants. Nice work. That was phenomenal, thank you very much.
- b. Eric: Yes, the LGER grant program- we were awarded \$205,180 back for CEAP, NEAP and sector webinars and summer ESSL. Echoing what Gretchen said it is a process, they do have a ton of questions. We're working on formation of a formal trails and recreation committee. With the launch of our Weston & Sampson recreation plan we wanted a more formal group together to be able to have public meetings with minutes and voting members so when we vote on something we can take those recommendations directly to the Selectboard and say the committee has voted this, with the Board having the final say. Applications are out for that now, ad running in paper and our websites. The RFP for town website was launched as well. Reached a handshake agreement with owner of One Bogle Road to work on next part of Valley Trail project.

X. Mount Snow updates:

- a. We opened last Wednesday and have weathered rain events since then but have made some snow since and are hoping temps stay cold this coming week. Focus is on keeping our community safe – facial covering reminders is a big portion of what's happening right now in lift lines. Some guest frustration with reservations system but that's how we're able to maintain the required distancing.

XI. Hermitage Club updates: *None in attendance*

XII. BDCC Updates: *None in attendance*

XIII. Chamber Update:

- a. It's renewal and enrollment time. Working on website updates, have reached out to business owners for updated information. First board meeting on Monday morning; looking to rebuild. Member benefits are another focus for us moving forward. Getting visitors center cleaned up. Trying to keep the communication going, sending out a newsletter every 10 days or so; hoping to move that to weekly soon so please send me anything you would like included. Memberships are a little below last year's numbers. Visiting businesses this week, offering payment plan for membership and looking forward to sitting down with lodging properties and giving them face time. I think this is as important of a time as ever to be a member of the Chamber and business community.

XIV. Next meeting January 7.

XV. Motion to adjourn by Eric at 8:51 am, seconded by Ethan.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economic Development, Town of Dover