

**Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
via Zoom & Wilmington Town Offices
Thursday, September 2, 2021**

Members present: Eric Durocher, Bill Benneyan, Christine Howe

Members present via Zoom: Tracy Bartels, Gretchen Havreluk, Vicki Capitani, Meg Staloff, Adam Grinold, Heidi Taylor, Charlie Foster

Also present: Shannon Wheeler, Scott Tucker (8:20 arrival)

Meeting called to order at 8:02 am by Vice Chair Eric

- I. Additions or changes to the agenda:
 - a. Move Chamber update to earlier in meeting.
 - b. Add in person meeting location change.
- II. Approve minutes from August 5th meeting
 - a. Gretchen: under other business: change discussion to clarify decision made to continue to hold hybrid meetings until further notice.
 - b. Motion to approve as amended by Gretchen, seconded by Heidi. All approve.
- III. Meeting location change:
 - a. Motion to move in person meeting location from Wilmington Town Offices to Deerfield Valley Rescue by Christy starting with October meeting, seconded by Heidi. All approve.
- IV. Chamber Update
 - a. Charlie: new website went live yesterday. Businesses can update their listing from banner at the top. Tim Dolan helping update things. Moving forward we will be closed on Tuesdays and starting November 1st we will be open Thursday – Mondays. We've been people counting and Tuesday was minimal. Wine & Harvest we have about 40 vendors, online ticket sales are up against 2019.
- V. Housing Committee:
 - a. Gretchen: have been working on shared housing piece that Sue Rand is spearheading. Five signed up to take online course we've sent out press release about. Sue Rand had a training with Ann Marie Pluhar to set those five up with the course. Granicus checked in asking where we are on that short term rental registration program. Do not think we're ready for that at this time. *Eric: same with Dover until it's inclusive of all rental units. We should continue this conversation as both towns so one isn't at a disadvantage.* Vermont Housing Summit in Arlington on October 13: Gretchen, Meg & Mike Tuller attending for Wilmington, Eric for Dover.
 - b. Eric: The Housing Committee has a new member, Willi Parent, from The Hermitage Club
- VI. Marketing Committee:
 - a. Gretchen: put out RFQ for photos/videography with September 15 deadline. We posted more locally than State boards to try and get people that know the Valley. Trampoline is working on Branding project and should have an update in next couple of weeks.
 - b. Eric: The update we've gotten so far is once they took a look at what we had they're working with our last logo efforts and they're just taking the next step. All that previous work was not for nothing.
 - c. Meg: when we spoke with Trampoline and they really seemed to understand we didn't need a new logo but that they would help us with deployment of it, making it really feel it's for the whole valley, so I'm excited to see what they say.
- VII. DV Fiber Update:
 - a. No new updates.
- VIII. Other Business:
 - a. Local Job Fair:

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- i. Gretchen: going back to talking about digital advertising matching up available housing and jobs in the area. Spoke to BDCC and they didn't have much luck with the online versions of job fairs they were doing. People in the area are either not interested in working, not available to work or are already working. I don't know that a job fair will help us.
- ii. Christine: I reached out to Adam; we're seeing an uptick in applicants, but they are local. Thinking about where we could host a site for this.
- iii. Adam: it's also thinking about posting a static list and it immediately being outdated.
- iv. Eric: I'm not sure in terms of functionality if the Chamber or anyone could manage that. I'll look into what's available to manage this and we can decide how to move forward.

IX. Wilmington updates:

- a. Gretchen: very successful Old Home Week. Well attended, have heard of no Covid cases. The Adams Farm event was great, parade was well attended. Nicki Steel has been working many years on this. Sewer/GMP easements for East Main St sidewalk project happening. Held kick off meeting for North Main St project. Dufresne Group was hired for that and is working on preliminary design. Working on the Bridge Ramp, trying to get easement from Great River Hydro has been difficult, getting closer. Safety Facility is coming along nicely.
- b. Scott: Public Safety Building is actually a little behind due to rain and contractor availability. Trying to keep people healthy is our biggest challenge with variants. We're in a 95% vaccination range for personnel.
- c. Gretchen: fall off on property transfers in August compared to previous months. *Eric: seeing that in Dover as well, a lack of inventory not a lack of buyers.*

X. Dover updates:

- a. Vicki: continuing hybrid SB meetings, retained the Necrason Group until June 30th to continue to push the weighting study task force. We survived the rain well with mitigation work we did; we did help Newfane on their roads after a storm.
- b. Eric: September 17 date set for launch of new Town of Dover website. Dover Launch business plan competition is cruising along, held a brainstorming session Tuesday night at Deerfield Bar & Bottle with around 25 attendees on what we'd like to see for businesses. Peak Radio is pitching in \$5k in free radio advertising for the winner in addition to the \$20,000 prize. RT Brown at BDCC has reached out on additional programs for the non-winners to help get their businesses off the ground. Last week in partnership with SoVTA we filed letters of interest for VOREC and ERSA grants for trails and rec projects for a total of just over \$330k. Should hear later this month if we're invited to submit full applications for them. We did get Act 250 jurisdictional opinion to install parking lot on USFS land on Handle Rd for the Ridge trail project.

XI. Hermitage Club updates:

- a. Bill: Continuing to grow steadily with another half a dozen members in August, over 250 members now. Mountain maintenance is in good hands, our 2nd summer working on those infrastructure pieces. All lift inspections are scheduled for later this month. Real estate front: good movement on 8 Chamonix townhomes that will come online through the season and are being marketed. DRB hearing later this month at some Stag's Leap homes, not our projects but our members. Most of our spare time is recruiting.

XII. Mount Snow updates:

- a. Tracy: As of September 7, all employees and guests in all locations across North America will need face coverings indoors. Some of that is aligned with the USFS, so we feel it's an appropriate

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step. Not in open tents or gondolas/lifts, but just indoors unless there are more local requirements called for. Brewer's Festival this Saturday, ticket sales are going well for that. We have limited numbers compared to past years. Jeff Touhy is returning as entertainment.

XIII. BDCC Updates:

- a. Adam: September 9 from 6-8pm is an Idea Jam we're cosponsoring at Innovation Box on Putney Rd, recently rehabbed into a coworking space facility with supportive services. You get 90 seconds to pitch your idea and a chance to ideate together. In support of BDCC business plan competition that is launching. Working with Dover to support their competition. Lots of potential with recent happenings in Afghanistan and refugees. Partnering with the Ethiopian Community Development Council. They had previously put in an application to open an office in Brattleboro. ECDC has pledged to open office regardless of funding award this year. Anticipate bringing upwards of 75 refugees to at first Brattleboro for 3 months but then they can move into surrounding communities as they wish so we encourage those communities to make their value added pitch. Received some national awards lately for programming Pipelines & Pathways Program. Christy Betit now soliciting supervisory unions for an educator to work at our offices on this. Senator Leahy's office sent notice that one of our pushed projects has been earmarked by him, a 900k grant to develop workforce programming and AI app to match life experience to job skills.

XIV. Moover Update:

- a. Christine: gearing up for Winter. Recruitment efforts here started a couple of weeks ago, our own ads on our buses. A good group of candidates have come in. We've drawn back a few previous drivers so we're very optimistic. Helped shuttle people for parade for Old Home Week. Route 30 study out right now on a fixed route from Brattleboro up to Stratton, there is a survey out with a link on our page. Good response so far.

XV. Next meeting October 7.

XVI. Motion to adjourn by Gretchen at 8:55 am, seconded by Christine

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economic Development, Town of Dover