

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
via Zoom & Deerfield Valley Rescue
Thursday, November 4, 2021

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

Members present via Zoom: Gretchen Havreluk, Eric Durocher

Also present via Zoom: Shannon Wheeler, Meg Staloff

Audio was difficult to follow for some in person comments – apologies if anything was missed

Meeting called to order at 8:05 am by Chair Heidi

- I. Additions or changes to the agenda: *None*
- II. Approve minutes from October 7 meeting
 - a. Motion to approve by Eric, seconded by Gretchen. All approve.
- III. Housing Committee Update:
 - a. 3 people initially looking to take the shared housing courses, Eric is stepping in to help get the 2 still interested going. Will make another push for this and working on waking up the Deerfield Valley Housing Facebook page. If you have ideas on items to post there, please share. Eric and Gretchen met with Jenny Hyslop from VT Housing & Conservation Board. There aren't a lot of programs we're currently eligible for due to income levels. There is a grant program offering up to \$3,500 for a Housing Consultant. Eric is working on this letter. Hopeful to get Connie Snow, former director of Windham Windsor Housing Trust as the consultant. Started conversation on a Deerfield Valley housing trust. William Parent preparing a survey for businesses to see what their employee housing struggles are. Meeting Wednesday, 11/10.
 - b. Adam has taken a deep dive into redevelopment authority and will share info on what he's learned.
 - c. Gretchen has asked VHCB where the Act 250 annual money Mount Snow and The Hermitage pay each year is going (around \$200,000). The only way to access those funds is through those housing agencies like WWHT and they are busy working on homelessness in other areas. Laura Sibililia reached out on this. Will continue asking on this.
 - d. Meg & Wilmington Planning Commission submitting an application to the bylaw modernization grant program. If awarded, they'll be able to bring in a consultant to help make changes to zoning code to make it more friendly for development.
- IV. Marketing Committee Update:
 - a. Completed 2nd round of marketing director interviews, meeting next week to make that decision. VT department of tourism grant application deadline was last night, thank you to Meg for this heavy lift. This is for a specific campaign for diversity and equity in day trippers. Hoping to do a inclusive content creation and run a campaign from it. Branding was looked at and logo was well received but may need some color changes; will focus when we have new Director.
- V. DV Fiber Update:
 - a. Annual report is out, now 24 member towns. Received 4.1 million grant which will help complete Phase 1 for underserved towns.
- VI. Other Business:
 - a. Local Job Fair:
 - i. Eric has looked into technology options and there's not much that is helpful and low cost. Going to look at starting with the Deerfield Valley Housing Facebook page for now.
- VII. Wilmington update:

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- a. Working on budgets, preliminary plans for North Main St in hand, having public comment meeting in December. Environmental review process takes a year. Over 300 Welcome Wagon postcards sent out since last May. There have been some hiking events and a lakeside dinner this summer, none well attended. Have placed dog waste stations, thinking about places we could have a dog park.

VIII. Dover update:

- a. Finishing up commercial reappraisal, launching into RFP for residential reappraisal. Struggling with redistricting, going to fight to keep our current district. Dover Launch final round will present at Carinthia on November 18. Not invited to complete VOREC grant application but will move forward with full ERSA grant application for Town Forest projects.

IX. Mount Snow update:

- a. Made snow last night, still targeting November 19 opening day weather permitting. Still focused on hiring, 300 J1s that have accepted offers and will be here by mid-December. H2Bs have arrived this week for housekeeping in the Grand Summit. Have 233 beds total for staff.

X. Hermitage Club update:

- a. Recruiting for daytime snowmaking and private instructors especially, mid-December opening. Membership growth is steady and continuing to outpace projections. Construction moving forward on Grenoble Way Townhomes.

XI. BDCC update:

- a. Celebrated refugee center ribbon cutting, 2 years earlier than we thought we'd be able to do that. 100 Afghan refugees in next 12 months plus 75 general refugees which is a little slower process due to backlog. Launching employer preparation for welcome and support for this in next couple of months. Earmark request for AI to help identify job skills from life skills, search them in English and match up available jobs. Awarded quarter million grant to build a seed fund. RT Brown is relocating to Connecticut, re-envisioning what that position will look like in future.

XII. Chamber update: *None in attendance*

XIII. Moover update: *None in attendance*

XIV. Next meeting December 2.

XV. Motion to adjourn by Eric at 8:58 am, seconded by Adam

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economic Development, Town of Dover