

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Economic Development Committee / Commission
Minutes
April 20, 2021, 9:30 am

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present: Dan Sherr, Wayne Hileman, Fran Keilty,

Public: Leslie Anderson, Chris Charles, Robyn Gray, Joan Lodson, Julia Nable

Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. Call to Order: 9:33
2. Approval of Minutes:
3. Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator- attending a Sustainable CT Equity training next month in the morning. Will have the meeting next month at 5:00 and see if that helps with attendance. Also discussed Committee make-up. Valerie has asked to step off. Michelle will check in with everyone to gauge commitment. We may want to recruit new members.
 - Affordable Housing, next Public Forum will probably be June 3 to discuss strategies to consider for final plan.
 - Sustainable CT- putting together Earth Day event for Sat. April 24th 10-1. Bringing together, WEC, Lake Waramaug Association, Lake Waramaug Task force, Steep Rock, the Garden Club, Shepaug Agriscience, Conservation Commission, Ec. Dev.,
 - Sidewalks, The State DOT did not approve part of the plan. The goal is to move forward with the section between Church Street and New Preston Hill Rd. The Titus block/Depot project is moving forward. This planning process will include a traffic study, parking analysis, pedestrian safety, sidewalks and lighting. It will also include meetings with the business owners and the public for input.
 - New home owners' mailings- March 10 new home sales.
 - WiFi Michelle's testing showed a dead zone between Judy Black and Marty's. Will look into repeaters. Fran mentioned there are dead zones in front Hickory Stick heading back towards National Iron bank as well. Michelle will check in with Jay Hubelbank to see if there is money left for repeaters. Also, have a goal of getting all the way up to GWs.
 - Convened an Arts Council meeting April 12 at the request of the Selectmen. Had 16 in attendance and there was enthusiasm for continuing.
4. New Business-
 - a. New Businesses highlight -Dermatologist buying the Owl building in New Preston. The Owl will stay. Booth property has a sale sign up, RIDE closed, trying to get the word out about Hidden Valley space (looking for someone who's interested in opening a breakfast lunch space, and not serving alcohol.)
 - b. Communications plan-

(attaching the plan below)

External and internal goals are listed within

- c. Now March 2020 survey results-
posted on the website
a survey of 42 questions targeting the families of Region 12 had 166 people respond.

Methods of determining the number of people living in town were discussed. Michelle mentioned she had looked at trash counts pre Covid and current, Wayne suggested looking at how many permits were given during the past year. All local measures will be helpful in supplementing census data in determining how many of our second homes are occupied.

5. Old Business

- a. Services directory- Going to populate directly between 70-90 service businesses. Next two weeks it should be up and running. Want to reach out to businesses to get added to the directory. Businesses were from the WBA and found others through Instagram, A great way for service businesses to get recognized, and a great way for people to find the services they need.
- b. Send some kind of mailer to promote explore Washington the new Services Directory

6. Reports

- a. WBA- block party June 4th with a band, just getting the planning off the ground. The idea is to have everything set up outside
- b. Selectman's- none at the moment

7. Visitor comments-

- There's a change in ownership at the pantry- old owners are retiring. Sold the business not the building.
- First Congregational Church- Starting June 11 Friday night music series, with local musician's play an hour at the PO outside. If you know any musicians, please let Robin Gray know.

8. Adjournment, at 11:03am

This meeting can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/TZ2XLbkYAPg>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Reale

Selectman's Assistant

Attached below are the WEDC Communication Plan and NOW

WEDC Communication Plan



The purpose of this Communications Plan is to outline the goals, priorities, strategies, and tools the Town of Washington will use in our communications.

The goals fall into two categories, internal and external communications.

External communications promote Washington to non-residents as a place to visit, shop, hike, eat and move to.

Internal communications are targeted at engaging our residents in the events of our businesses, non-profits and government.

External Goal

In order to promote the town of Washington, bringing visitors for the benefit of businesses and non-profits as well as potential new residents, the WEDC has retained SandorMax to design and maintain the Explore Washington website. The tag line “You’ll live it here” was developed and drives the message.

Strategies to reach an audience outside of Washington:

- Promote events on CT Visit Tourism website
- Work with Discover Litchfield Hills to promote events and locations
- Pitch stories to CT Tourism Council, other media outlets and journalists
- Post and engage on social media to acquire new followers
- Send monthly newsletter to growing email list
- Create stories and blogs to be picked up by other outlets
- Distribute the Passport business guide and “Explore” cards to help guide visitors

Our goal is to continue to add to the email list and collect followers on social media. We will monitor the web-site traffic, email lists and social media followers to measure success.

Internal Goal

The communications within Washington are used to improve community engagement. This includes promoting the activities and events of businesses, non-profits and government.

Strategies:

- Coordinate, print and mail quarterly 8 or 10 pg. Newsletter to all Washington households
- Maintain and promote events calendar on Explore for all local entities
- Utilize Selectman's weekly email and help grow the list
- Mail welcome letter to all new households to introduce to Explore and Selectman's email
- Distribute the Passport business guide and "Explore" cards to help guide visitors
- Work with the town to maintain and improve the municipal web-site.
- Work with the WBA to help promote community events and town initiatives

Guiding Objectives

POCD (Pg. 11) Chap. 2, Demographics & Housing, Goal 1-- Strive to reverse our population decline and create a stable population level so that the Town can plan for future community and public service needs, as well as attract younger households to maintain a demographic balance. This can be accomplished by providing a targeted mix of services, housing and economic opportunities that will attract a broad range of households.

POCD (pg. 21) Chap. 3, Economic Development, Goal 2- Washington must provide an array of services and activities that make the Town economically sustainable at the local level while enabling it to compete at the regional level.



Washington NOW Initiative – Bringing Young Families to Washington

Survey of Region 12 Parents, on-line survey sent May 2020, 166 responded to 42 questions. Respondents all currently have a child in the school system but have lived here for anywhere from less than a year to more than 20. 39% live in Washington.

Who are they and why did they choose Region 12

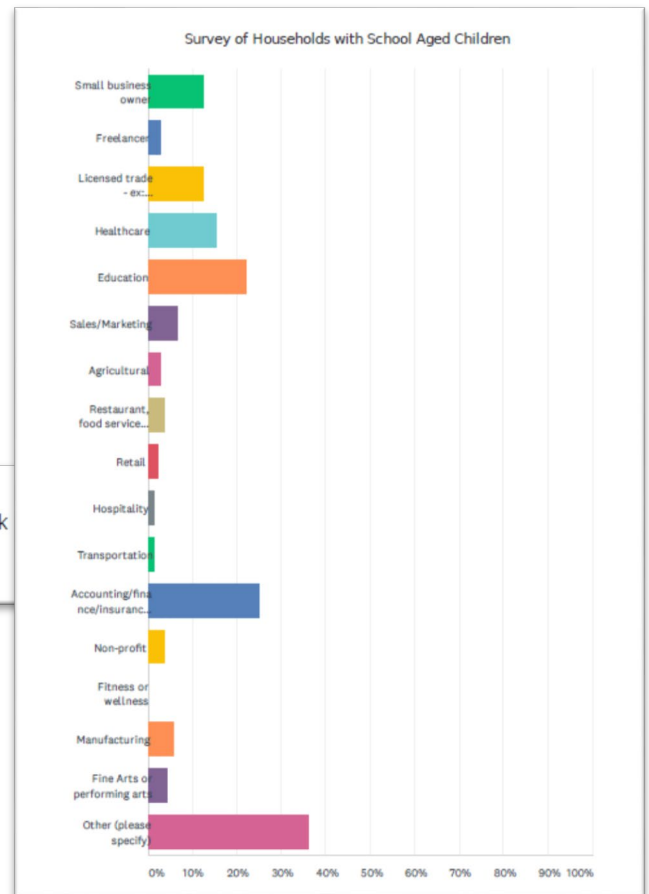
These are young families with a commitment to education:

- **Q10-Children** - Ave 2.4 per household, 0 -11 years old when they moved here
- **Q10 -Parents** –79% had at least one person 24-40 years of age in household
- **Q12-Occupations** – Top 5- Financial Services, Education, Healthcare, Small Business Owner, Licensed Trade
Note: The top occupations require certification involving significant education
- **Q11-Income** – 66%, \$51,000 – \$150,000 annual income, 12% below and 22% above

Q12 At the time you moved from your previous home, what were the occupation(s) of the adults (18 years or older) in your household? (check all that apply)

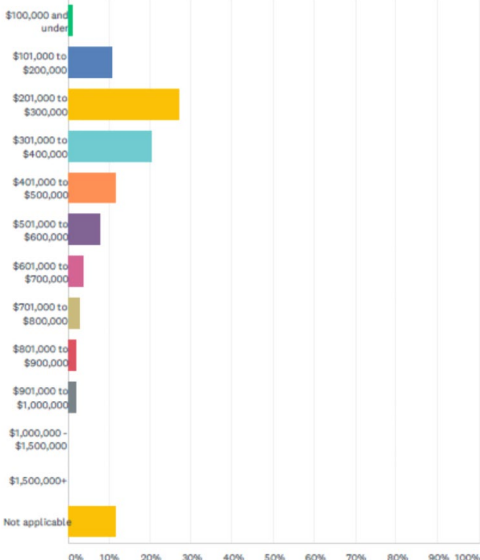
Answered: 135 Skipped: 31

- **Q 34- House Price** 69% who bought in the Region, paid in the price range of - \$100,000 – \$500,000.



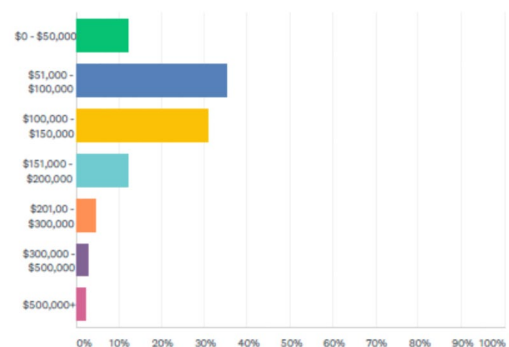
Q34 What price range did you purchase your home in?

Answered: 104 Skipped: 62



Q11 At the time you moved from your previous home, what was your annual household income (combined earnings of all adults in the household 18 years and older)?

Answered: 133 Skipped: 33



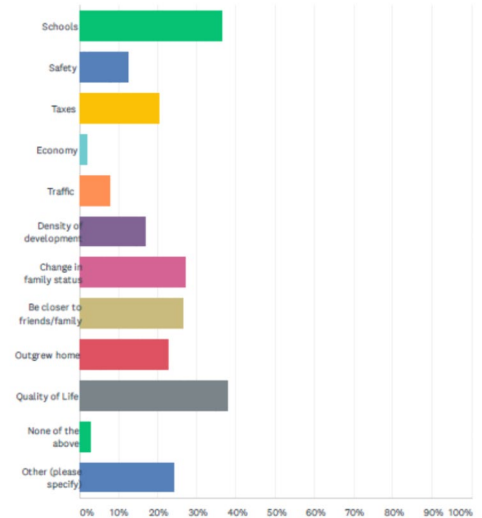
Lifestyle- Why they left and why they chose us

Q9-Primary reasons for moving:

- **Quality of Life**
- **Schools**
- **Change in family status**
- **Be closer to friends/family**
- **Outgrew home**
- **Taxes**
- **Density of development**

Q9 Which, if any, of the following were reasons you decided to move from your previous home? (check all that apply)

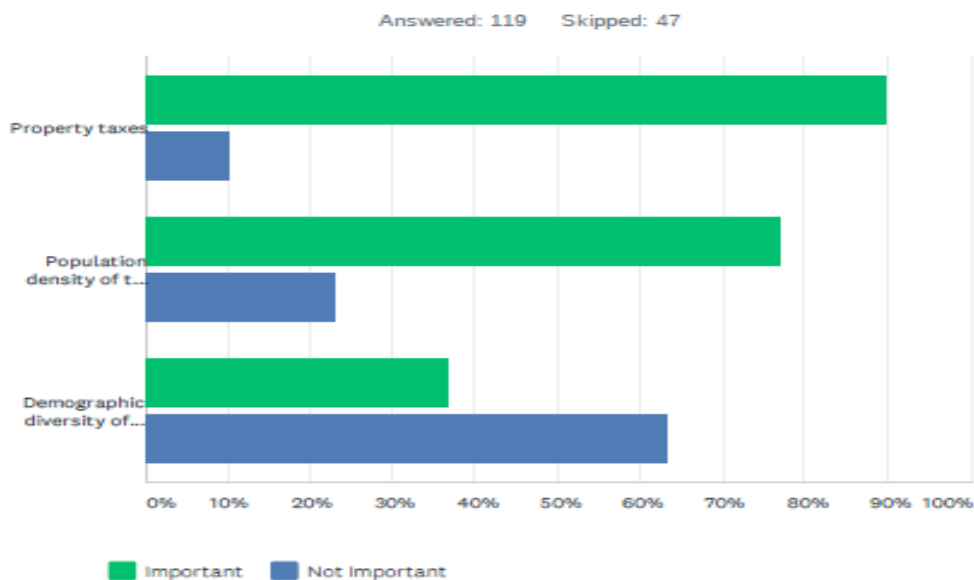
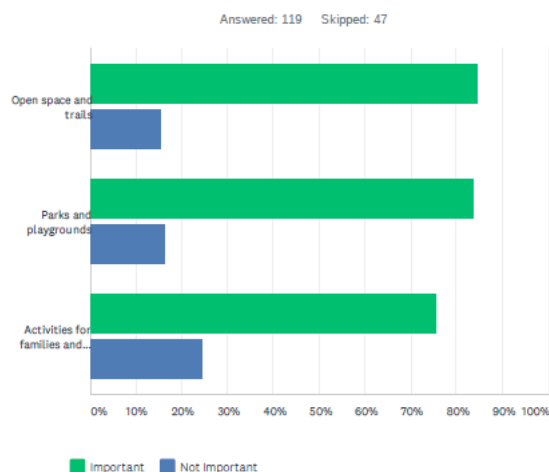
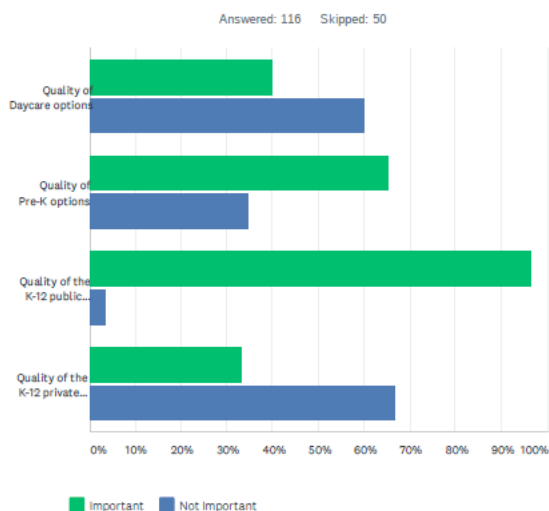
Answered: 137 Skipped: 29



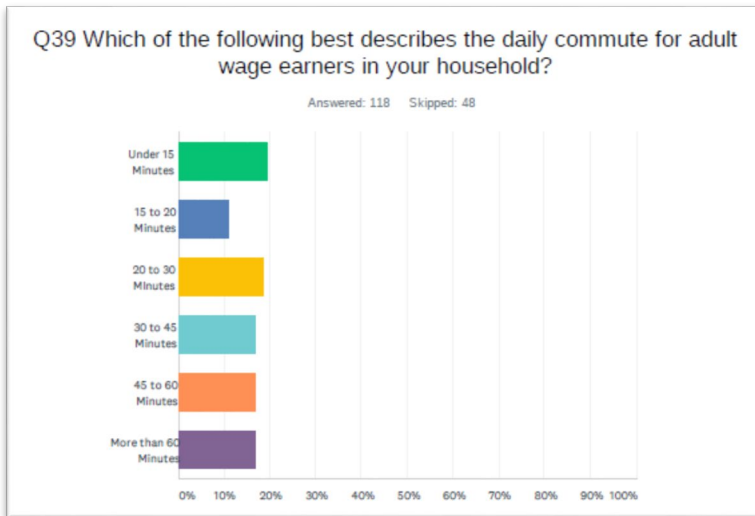
Q25-Preferences These are young working families with a strong preference for small shops and local restaurants (68%) and local grocery stores (64%) over chain stores and restaurants (23%), indicating a commitment to “life style” in their choice of communities.

Top 4 Factors rated as Important in their choice to move here: Quality of Public K-12 schools, Property taxes, Open space and trails, Parks and Playgrounds

Q23, Q24, Q27 How important were each of the following factors when comparing properties in one town vs another?



Q39-They commute with 1/3 20 minutes or less, 1/3 20 – 45 minutes and 1/3 45 minutes or longer. Virtually all (90%) commute by car. Note: Based on the ACS, 82% of working Washington residents' commute.



Q26-

	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Commuting distance to work	78.99% 94	21.01% 25	119
Commuting distance to schools	71.43% 80	28.57% 32	112

- **Q-14 Other towns included in the search**
 - > Brookfield – 19%
 - > Litchfield – 18%
 - > New Milford – 18%
 - > Newtown – 17%
 - > Southbury – 19%
 - > Woodbury – 25%

- Other Adjoining towns considered**
- > Bethlehem – 11%
 - > Kent – 13%
 - > Morris – 9%
 - > Warren – 6%

Q3-Became familiar with the area:

Grew up nearby – 40%
Family or friends live nearby – 30%
Work nearby – 15%

Q32-School websites visited when searching for your Region 12 home

None - 64%
Great Schools.org-10%

Region 12 website- 22%
Niche.com- 4%

- **Q7-Live before moving to Region 12**
 - > Connecticut – 74% (Towns “touching” Washington – 26%)
 - > New York – 10%