

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Washington Economic Development Committee/ Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 18 2021, 5:00, Via Zoom

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present: Jim Brinton, Wayne Hileman, Michael Jackson, Robyn Gray, Daniel Sherr, Fran Keilty, Lisa Stein

Public: Julia Nable, Joan Lodsins, Chris Charles

Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. Call to Order:

2. **Approval of Minutes** of March 16 & April 20,2021 Moved by Jim Brinton, second by Michael Jackson, all in favor unanimously approved.

3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator Membership of Committee**, Robin Gray is now officially a member! We thank Val Sedelnick, Nick Solley and Howard Rosenfeld for the previous service. Asking the committee if there's someone you can think of who would be interested in this committee.

- **Affordable Housing-** continuing to move forward. Next forum June 3rd- sharing a list of ideas to help us address our lack of affordable housing, need it for younger families to move to town and we also need it for our work force.
- **Sustainable CT**, Working towards certification deadline in August. Next areas of focus for Michelle will be: Demonstrate how we support local businesses and Effective Community Communications. Also looking at a Farm Council
- **Sidewalks-** New Preston project. Met with engineers, should be close on agreement for the first phase of the sidewalk agreement, going to talk to the businesses and let them decide when will be the best time for them to start working.
- **New Home Owners Mailing-** There were 8 new homeowners in April.
- **Town Hall Services Brochure-** The WBA is going to be bringing back the welcome bags to the new home owners in town, the brochure should help the new residents of Washington with questions they may have and whom to contact about it.
- **Map Update on Explore Washington-** Planning on having some pop out areas where its denser so people can have an easier time finding things. We may want

to think about using it in a print form for a kiosk. Should help highlight the non-town center spots since GPS in town is spotty and we don't have directional signs.

- The next Arts Council meeting is May 26 at 7:00. The next quarterly Town Newsletter is due out first week of June and discussion of the Child Care continues.

4. New Business-

- a. **New Businesses Highlight-** Valley Spirit on the Titus block is going to be moving out that space, they brought a lot of great energy into the depot, unfortunately they'll be moving out, but Jampa will be moving up to the green to continue to do acupuncture with Valley Spirit Wellness. "The Depot Dog" will be moving in; she's hoping to open in a couple months, selling primarily things for dogs.
- b. **POCD-** Plan of conservation and development. Would like the committee to look at things we have achieved and directions where we can go. The next plan is going to be an update of the existing plan there is right now. Wayne Hileman, chair of the Planning Commission, shared that the chapters on Economic Development and Village Centers are going to be pretty much the same. In terms of this committee the whole town is important for economic dev not just the town centers however our Business Districts are in our Village Centers.
- c. **CT Visits "Drinks on Us"**- Restaurants are encouraging people to come and get a free drink or meal if they have been vaccinated either one shot or both; In Washington we currently have 4 places signed up: White Horse, Marty's, Community Table and the PO. This program will take place May 19- 31st. Will be promoting this on social media on Explore Washington.
- d. **"Say Yes to CT"**- Promoting all summer long, the state is doing a lot of Ads, hoping people will be traveling to Connecticut and encouraging them to do so by showing them all the great outdoorsy things. We have "The 15 Most Incredible Spots in Washington to Explore." The right stories to tell to people not only in town but also to people who have been thinking about visiting town.
- e. **Magazine Shout outs-** Yankee Magazine mentioned, Lake Waramug state park and called it one of the best campgrounds in New England. They also mentioned in gardens that inspire the Hollister House Gardens, and for Travel and Leisure, the IT hotel was The Mayflower Inn.

5. Old Business-

- a. **Services Directory, Julia Nable-** It is now live on the site. Talk about how were going to promote it and reach out to the businesses we have missed. We got the business names from the WBA website as well as our outreach. We didn't ask anyone we assumed people would like to be listed to spread their business awareness. We'll

put the info about the directory in the June 1st email blast- to let people know that the directory is live and let people know if they would like to be listed on it to submit the form and we'll have them added. We should also think about extending this new service directory information to the Washington Facebook community so they can all add their businesses. In the future we may think about getting this in print possibly a postcard size that directs people to this site directly.

6. **Report of WBA & Selectmen on items not on the agenda-** The CDC recommendations for outdoor events, that we come up with a town plan for what we're going to be doing. We want to make sure that we're all in communication with one another during this time.
7. **Visitors**
8. **Adjournment, 6:30 pm**