

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Washington Economic Development Committee/ Commission

Tuesday January 19, 2021, 9:30 am

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Present: First Selectman Jim Brinton, Michelle Gorra, Dan Sherr, Tony Bedini, Jay Hubelbank, Fran Keilty, Wayne Hileman, Jeffery Miller, Lisa Stein

Absent: Nick Solley, Phil Markert, Michael Jackson, Val Sedelnick

Public: Chris Charles, Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray, Lance Reynolds

1. Call to Order- Michelle Gorra called the meeting to order at 9:34
2. Approval of minutes- Dan Sherr moved to approve minutes of Dec. 15,2020. Jeff Miller seconded, all in favor
3. Report of activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator
 - a. Affordable Housing- Task team continues to meet. We had 273 responses to the housing survey and are now conducting a survey of employees in town. We are planning a public meeting for late February/early March. Michelle explained the research she had been doing on deed restrictions. Wayne helped explained the difference in the income check between those who own vs. rent.
 - b. Community Center- team is getting ready for the public info session Jan 28, 2021.
 - c. Sidewalk update- We did not get the grant for the Titus area sidewalks but will continue to apply. We are moving ahead with redoing the sidewalks in New Preston to coincide with the State DOT repaving of Rt. 45
 - d. Print newsletter- due date for submissions is Feb 12 for the March edition.
 - e. New Homeowners mailing, 14 for November. Have not gotten to Dec. yet.
 - f. Zoning 12.8, temporary events. Public Hearing was Jan 12. Many non-profits wrote letters to the ZC with concerns about their ability to hold current events and develop new ones. 110 people attended the hearing and almost all spoke against the new regulation. A discussion followed regarding the role of EDC in this and other issues that are outlined in POCD. The Board of Selectmen are researching a noise ordinance but it is not straightforward. The role of the ZC in the POCD was also discussed.
 - g. COVID vaccine communication. The town is trying to reach out to seniors over 75 to help get the registered for the vaccine through the state sites.
4. New Business
 - a. New business highlight- Klemm bought the Kitchen works building and will be opening a satellite office in the small section. Is looking for someone in retail to rent the larger space and has had many inquiries. I have also heard from someone moving to town and looking to open a store front.

- b. Outreach to businesses, re COVID needs. -Michelle reminded everyone there is still money in the COVID relief fund if businesses are in need. It was suggested that I reach out to past recipients.
- c. Sustainability CT. There are four categories in the Sustainable CT checklist that are applicable to the office of Economic and Community Development. Michelle will be working with the committee to get credit for what we have done and to prioritize next objective to work on. The four categories are: 2-"Thriving Local Economies" 4-"Vibrant and Creative Clutural Ecosystems", 6.1-"Complete Streets- sidewalks, bicycle and parking" 8.2-"Effective Community Communication"
- d. Budget for next year. Michelle presented the Washington Economic Development Plan and Funding Request for 2021-2022. (See attached) The committee made suggestions including Wayne who helped bring us up to speed on the Broadband Fiber-optic network progress of Northwest ConneCT. Fran also emphasized the need for a parking study of the Depot. It was suggested that \$5,000 be added to last year's request for new initiatives.

A motion to approve the budget was made by Dan Sherr and seconded by Tony Bedini. All were in favor.

Michelle also mentioned that there is more work than the part-time position allows for and she will discuss this with the Board of Selectmen during budget talks. She had the support of the committee.

5. Old Business

6. Report of Selectmen and WBA

- a. Selectman- COVID still on the rise. They have been in constant contact with the Dept. of Public Health regarding the rollout of Phase 1B, Seniors 75 and over. Jim is trying to get a vaccine clinic here in town but until then residents need to register on the state web-site for one of the established sites.

7. Adjournment: 11:10

Respectfully Submitted.

Michelle Gorra