

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Washington Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 3:00 pm

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present: Trisha McMahon, Kristen Atlas, Fran Keilty

Public: Liz Paige, Liz Fenton, Ann Jamieson, Julia Nable

Staff: Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. **Call to order:** 3:03 pm by Michelle Gorra
2. **Approval of Minutes of Sept and Oct. Meeting Minutes:** tabled until next meeting
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
 - a. **New home owner mailings & email sign-ups-** 7 new home sales
 - b. **Newsletter-** The newsletter is ready to go to the printer and due in mailboxes Dec. 1. It is 12 pages again. This appears to be the new norm.
 - c. **Arts Council-** The Arts Council has decided to sponsor a bagpipe player for Holiday in the Depot. The player will wear the new Arts Council Logo to help raise awareness of the Council.
 - d. **Sidewalk grant-** We just received word that we did not receive the grant. Michelle will reach out to see if we can get any follow up information.
 - e. **Affordable Housing-** Michelle spoke at an affordable housing event in Southbury on Saturday. At the event there was a presentation about the importance of “workforce housing” on the local economy.
 - f. **Winter Lights-** The lights are underway. The fundraising is coming along but more is needed. We will be adding one tree in Marbledale at White Horse. The Village Improvement Society still allows us to run the fundraising through them. The EDC suggested we put a committee together to help with the project.
 - g. **CT Visit- western district tourism-** Michelle went to the meeting, it's the state's tourism program. All of western CT all the way down to Greenwich. Washington's Steep Rock made it into the brochure showing Macricosta in one of the photos.
 - h. **MLK day-** January 15 a day of service, in the past we call it “Washington Gives”. Michelle is going to be working with Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens and in the past, we've highlighted all our nonprofits as a way for volunteerism.
4. **Old Business-** none at this time
5. **New Business- Explore metrics- Julia Nable-** Julia comes twice a year to keep us up to date on how Explore is doing - ELITE DAILY, contacted Julia (they have over 3 million followers on Instagram) to talk about a Day in the Depot, it was published in October. Hopkins was also featured on an Instagram that has over 2.2 million.

On Social Media the Explore page is really taking off, over 4,000 followers, there's other 15,000 shares people have used with the hashtag #explorewashington. On Facebook over 1,000 followers and on MailChimp over 2,000 subscribers which is well over the industry average. The Gilmore Girls have been a constant with searching on the website. For the Harvest Fest Explore purchased a \$50 ad and that

resulted in over 25k impressions, and 77 clicks to the event page. Next steps on the website: Holiday Shopping, Winter Experiences, Events Promotions, Spring Marketing, PR Assistance.
(link to presentation)

https://www.washingtonct.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif1396/f/uploads/11-21-23_explore_washington_metrics_edc.pdf

6. **Report of WBA & Selectmen on items not on the agenda-** The sign up for any business or organizations wanting to be a part of Holiday in the Depot is open. The WBA mentioned they won't be doing any luminaries in the Holiday in the Depot this year.
7. Visitors
8. **Adjournment Motion to adjourn** by Trisha at 4:20 pm all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Reale
Selectman's Assistant

Recording: <https://youtu.be/CZ80RUat21A>