

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Washington Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 3:00 PM

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Member Present: Kristen Atlas, Trisha McMahon, Fran Keilty, Dan Sherr, Tony Bedini

Public: Julia Nable, Matt Muszala, Liz Fenton, Matilda Giampietro

Staff: Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. **Call to order:** Michelle Gorra called the meeting to order at 3:01pm
2. **Approval of Minutes of April 25th, 2023** by Trisha, and seconded by Kristen, all in favor.
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
 - a. **New Home Owner Mailings-** Only 3 new homes for April
 - b. **Newsletter-** In production goes to design today or tomorrow, had 25 submissions for this news quarter, became a great source for town information. May have to consider an increase in the budget to accommodate extra pages.
 - c. **Summer Postcard-** Proof went to the printer, goal is to be in mailboxes Memorial Day weekend, the first postcard we did was 2021 and had 13 event listings, this year we have 29 listings. Plan to print 1,000 extra- Michelle distributed last year around town and went to surrounding towns to expand that outreach. A realtor in town has also requested a stack for renters.
 - d. **Signs -**There has been a request of businesses to improve signage around the depot- We created a small subcommittee and walked around town. The first thing we would like to do is help mark the parking for the lot in Titus and the lot behind the town hall.
 - e. **Welcome Center-** Will schedule an opening hopefully next month
 - f. **WBA Breakfast and Business;** at the pantry the 3rd Monday of the month. Has been informative and well attended.
 - g. **Block Party -** June 2nd, joint event WBA and parks and Rec, EDC will have a table to collect emails and to talk to the community about things happening in town.
 - h. **Washington Bike Day -** June 3rd, Sat setup in front of town hall partnering with KCE will let people try E Bikes for free, going to work on a brochure about biking, to promote biking and day trips with the family.
4. **New Business- Explore Metrics with Julia Nable-** Most recent mention was on News 12 CT, "Road Trip Close to Home" where they mentioned the Hollister House Garden in Washington, they have 56,000 followers on their social media. Another recent CT Insider called New Preston "7 Cute Villages and hamlets to visit in CT" Travel and Leisure has 6.3 million followers and they added Washington to one of their recent articles. CT Visit, we get a lot of incoming traffic from that site, recent features from that site was a Mother's Day article, Hollister house, SHAG Festival, Holiday Shopping feature to support locals. On the explore site they're at 4,138 events published on the events calendar, on social media the highest post received 548 likes, with over 4,000 people reached. Explore on Instagram hit 4,000 followers! over 14,000 shared photos, people using their hashtag of #explorewashingtonct. Facebook has 1,541 followers. Mailchimp has 2,572 Subscribers. Top Referral Websites: Washingtonct.org, Federickgunn.org, CTvisit.com, Hollisterhousegarden.org, Link.tree(Instagram) Highest month ever page

view was over 38,000 in October 2022. 2022-2023 year to date comparison, there was a 29% Increase in visitors/ 81.2% New Visitors. There were over 27,000 pageviews of the Gilmore Girls Getaway article. The Gilmore girls getaway giveaway contest reached 5,512 people organically. Next steps are Spring and Summer photo Contest

5. Report of WBA and Selectmen on items not on the agenda. - The town budget vote is at 7:30, please come support the budget. WBA, the block party June 2nd, if you haven't attended in the past, please attend this year. The breakfast that are happening every month, they occur on the 3rd Monday at the Pantry at 8am

5. Visitors- Matilda Giampietro stated she wants to address what's happening with Wykeham, being opposed to a development that's too large for this historical neighborhood, this type of building isn't a "smart economic development". Matilda showed how large the structure is going to be in comparison to her home.

6. Adjournment- 4:18 made by Kristen all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Reale
Selectman's Assistant

Recording:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7so0kp3aB_I