

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Economic Development Committee / Commission

Minutes

March 16, 2021, 9:30 am

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present: Jim Brinton, Dan Sherr, Fran Keilty, Lisa Stein, Wayne Hileman, Tony Bedini, Fran Keilty

Public: Julia Nable, Carole Matteo, Joan Lodson, Leslie Anderson, Robyn Gray, Lance Reynolds, Susan Smith, Chris Charles

Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. Call to Order: 9:33am
2. Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of Feb 16. Jim moved, Dan seconded. All in favor, Fran abstained.
3. Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator
 - Affordable Housing Public Forum March 2nd at 7:00- We had 88 people in attendance. Great feedback from the forum. Recording on the website. Next Forum late April early May. The plan is to be finished in June.
 - Community Center- Preparing materials to start the fundraising. Dan suggested we start a committee involving some young community members as well as seniors to discuss programming and that we share an electronic version of print material to be shared.
 - Sustainable CT- Great meeting March 10th. Making good progress on goals. Need to put together a communications plan. I will write up for next EDC meeting and get feedback. Also looking at Complete Streets training to learn more about safety and accessibility for all.
 - Sidewalks, New Preston meeting will be later this month. The survey and engineering took a little longer than planned. The Titus block/Depot project is moving forward. We are having the area surveyed and I am putting together an RFP for a concept plan. 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.
 - Print Newsletter- Went in the mail March 5th. Thank you to Dan for his several articles. An email version was also sent and I am looking how that list is generated. Many thanks also to Angle for her many years of great work on the Newsletter. Next deadline is May 12 for a June distribution.

- New home owners' mailings- January and February each saw 7 new home sales. This is the lowest number in 10 months by around half. Response continues to be strong. 65 new email addresses have been added to the Selectman's list since October, 5 months, now have 1198.
- Signs, new signs in the Depot one with the QR code. New WiFi signs with the QR code are being distributed.
- 4. New Business-
 - a. New Businesses highlight-

Kitchen Goods location has been rented-looks like it will be home goods. New Antique store coming next Fall to New Preston. Space next to the market has CT Gold and Silver wholesale store going in. No movement yet on Hidden Valley Eatery. I have had two calls about people looking for retail space.
 - b. Explore statistics-
 - The Traffic on Explore Washington has doubled within the year, getting lots of subscribers for the e-newsletters.
 - Social Media has 2,500 followers, gaining 1000 followers within a year, and over 10,000 photos shared with the #explorewashingtonct hashtag. Usually these are the not so busy months but we're still gaining followers and receiving positive feedback from people during this time.
 - Continue to let Julia know about events your business or nonprofits are hosting.
 - Michelle would like to add a map to the Explore Washington

(presentation slides on Town Website/ Economic Development Committee page)
 - c. Services Directory-
 - Highlighting services businesses on explore Washington. Each business will have a blurb, contact info and their website will be available. Businesses' in the future when the site goes live can add their info the site if they live in Washington and a registered business. (Site should go live in a few weeks)
- 5. Old Business- none
- 6. Reports

WBA- The WBA will provide a piece to promote people to go to explore Washington if they're looking for services.

 - Bringing back the welcome bags, used to do it with the relators and lawyers in town. And for any new residents in town (within the past year)
 - Working on bringing back the community block party – outdoors, there was a movie and a band in the depot.
 - Also working on the tree lights, looking on adding more lights on the Green in New Preston. Looking at doing some sort of sponsorship with the tree- people looking to sponsor a tree.
- b. Selectman's report- American rescue plan act, broke down into 5 different categories:

1. Education
2. State gov
3. Individuals - (stimulus checks)
4. Local gov
5. Country gov.

Connecticut does not operate under a county government, currently Washington's allotment is roughly \$340,000 and the school system is around \$220,000.

County allotment is still going to come through the state, so we'll have additional funds.

Right now we have to create another fund to house this money, as soon as we get specific guidance from treasury.

7. Visitor comments- None

8. Adjournment, 11:09

The zoom meeting can be viewed at this link: <https://youtu.be/m7gckAHFrVO>

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Reale

Selectman's Assistant