

## TOWN OF WASHINGTON

### Washington Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 3:00 PM

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

**Member Present:** Jim Brinton, Tony Bedini, Wayne Hileman, Fran Keilty, Trisha McMahon, Lisa Stein, Dan Sherr

**Public:** Liz Fenton, Chris Charles, Joan Lodsins, Leslie Anderson

**Staff:** Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. **Call to order:** Michelle Gorra called the meeting to order at 3:02
2. **Motion:** motion by Dan seconded by Trisha to approve the minutes of Dec. 20, 2022. All in favor.
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
  - a. **New home owner mailings-** 6 in December
  - b. **Welcome Center-** Painting is finished, signs are up, just waiting for the interior displays. Maps are going into production this week. Need to meet with the staff at the museum one more time to solidify a few pictures, should be done soon
  - c. **Arts Council-** Put the call for volunteers in the selectmen's email, the deadline is now over. They may or may not make the appointments this selectmen's meeting, Jim said they received numerous applications of people interested, agreed that the council shouldn't have more than 10 members. Once the people are appointed we'll go ahead and call a first meeting and set a calendar for the meetings and set the bylaws for operations.
  - d. **Conferences-** Later this week, for indoor and outdoor spaces called "Reimagining Communal Spaces to be more Community Friendly" Michelle will let the committee know how the webinar goes.
  - e. **Photo Contest-** Had 68 people enter photos, received a lot of really stunning ones, the winter contest is now up and running. Got the email contact for the art dept of all schools and contacted ASAP, wanted to thank the businesses for giving gift certificates to the winners.
  - f. **Titus Project-** Had some surveying and engineering concepts done for Titus block to improve the pedestrian flow, the safety, parking etc. Been in contact with the COG, who has a new staff member who comes from the DOT. Looking for grants that this project will be eligible for.
  - g. **Planning Maps-** Met with Shelley too look at the new land use maps as part of the prep for the POCD. Some of the categories changed making the maps very different looking. Michelle is focusing on properly identifying the commercial businesses. More commercial activity happening where there wasn't before, schools have been labeled as commercial.
  - h. **Services Directory-** Last year we added a services directory to the explore website. Sarah Guillemette offered to help Michelle update the directory, if anyone has a chance go through the directory and let us know if any services that are no longer are in business/active so we can make it as accurate as possible.
  - i. **WBA workshop-** Jan 24th, will be doing a workshop for the WBA. Julia Nable will do a presentation "10 Free Ways to Promote Your Business." Jim and Michelle will also be there to answer any questions about what the town can do to help them, as well as Lisa and the board of the WBA. The workshop will take place at Judy Black at 5:30 PM. We would love to offer this as a zoom as well, Michelle will look into that.
4. **New Business**

a. **Daycare Status and communications-** Has been a letter to the editor in the newspapers. There was an FOI request, haven't spoken much online about the daycare. It's all been here in our meetings. A community member sent a letter to the Board of selectmen and town's lawyer with some questions about the daycare, and lease of the building. As an update there is no real update; the previous superintendent left and the school board doesn't feel comfortable moving forward with the move of central offices up to Shepaug. Michelle sent the PowerPoint about the daycare all the links- Will bring the new superintendent up to speed – Jim stated that the citizen's letter basically was a request of the board of selectman to have those questions reviewed by the town's attorney- the school is not prepared this year to have anything done to the building. Dan asked if there was enough new information for a March Newsletter article. The project is currently on hold so not at this time.

b. **Mid-year review of goals and next year's budget-**

1. Support Design and Construction of the Washington Community Center. Last budget \$1,500, may reduce for next year.
- 2- Support the housing commission's implementation of the Washington housing plan (state required) No budget request.
- 3- Continue to improve/ expand the audience engagement with the towns print/ social media to increase retail nonprofit economic support. Last budget request was \$47,000 but costs have increased and will need \$51,000 to do the same as last year.
4. Broadband Fiber- Optic Northwest Connect. Last budget is \$2,000 and felt we should leave it for community survey or outreach.
5. Sustainability CT work on objective "2- Thriving Local Economies"-  
"4- Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems", "6.1- Complete Streets- sidewalks, bicycle and parking." 8.2- Effective Community Communication"- No budget request from last year.
6. Work with NOW subgroups attracting young families, including services for families, real estate options. Last year's request \$2,000 to develop the daycare plan.
7. Continue to work with WBA. Last year's budget \$1,000 for supplies. Agreed to leave the same.
8. Conduct a Survey / Require to outline improved pedestrian and parking options in the villages. Last year there was no budget request. Michelle is thinking we may need some money for engineering to prepare the Titus project for grants.
9. Support / advance town and regional arts & culture organizations and events for the 2022-2023 calendar. Last year's budget \$2,000 felt we should leave the same.

Last year's request. New Initiatives \$2,500 - Projects \$8,500 Communications \$47,000 Total \$58,000. Michelle will put together next year's request for February's meeting.

For unexpended funds discussed adding picnic tables near the river and replacing the pedestrian signs.

5. **Report of WBA and Selectmen on items not on the agenda.** Not much to report at this time
6. **Visitors-** Dan asked if this is a municipal election year. Joan said it is.
7. **Adjournment-** Motion to adjourn at 4:05 made by Dan Sherr, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda Reale  
Selectman's Assistant

Recording

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gplu2JsQpnA>