

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Washington Economic Development Committee/ Commission

Tuesday December 15, 2020, 9:30 am

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Present: First Selectman Jim Brinton, Michelle Gorra, Michael Jackson, Dan Sherr, Tony Bedini, Jay Hubelbank, Fran Keilty, Val Sedelnick, Wayne Hileman, Phil Markert

Absent: Nick Solley, Lisa Stein, Jeffery Miller

Public: Carole Matteo, Chris Charles, Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray, Julia Nable, Julie King, Lance Reynolds

1. Call to Order- Michelle Gorra called the meeting to order at 9:34
2. Approval of minutes- Jim Brinton moved to approve minutes of Nov. 10. 2020. Phil Markert seconded, all in favor
3. Report of activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator
 - a. Affordable Housing- Task team continues to meet. There is currently a housing survey open to all residents. More than one person in a household can take it.
 - b. Community Center- team is getting materials for fund raising and for the public info session Jan 28, 2021, Dan had a great informational article in the quarterly Newsletter.
 - c. Depot Bathroom- the Senior Center Director was uncomfortable with the building being open during the pandemic. Legion Hall will be closed for now and there is a port-o-let back in the parking lot behind Town Hall.
 - d. Kiosk- several people asked about having a digital kiosk. Michelle will research
 - e. Print Newsletter- The quarterly went out this month. Had graphics on the front page encouraging sign-ups to the Selectman's e-mail as well as Explore Washington's Newsletter. Angel, who has been collecting the information, will be turning that over to Michelle through the next issue. Extra copies are being distributed at the Market.
 - f. New Homeowners mailing, 15 sent for October. Explore e-mail list increased by 37 in Dec so far and 27 in November. 83 new followers on Instagram since Nov. 1.
 - g. Zoning 12.8, events. The hearing was supposed to be on Monday but was canceled. Both the Planning Commission and the NHCOC find the new language inconsistent with the POCD in regards to arts & culture.
 - h. For 2021 the WEDC will meet the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30.
4. New Business
 - a. New business highlight- held ribbon cutting for Washington Curated on Sat. Nov 14th. Jim and Michelle were there as well as Fran and Lisa from the WBA and members of the community.
 - b. Explore Washington/ CT Visit / Litchfield Hills- Julia of Sandor Max reported on the meeting with Evan Dobos of Discover Litchfield Hills. Julia will be sharing some blog posts with Discover LH and they discussed how to link some calendar events. Michelle

will work on getting all Washington businesses registered on the Discover site so they will show up on their map.

- c. Budget for next year- it is time to start thinking about next year's request. Michael Jackson mentioned it would be a good idea to develop a list of services and trade businesses in town. Dan mentioned the Passport that was developed and printed for stores and restaurants and how it should be similar.

5. Old Business

- a. Holiday in the Depot/ Depot Lights- The Drive-Thru was a big success. It is estimated that over 500 cars participated. Many businesses and organizations came together to make it happen. Michelle will put a Thank You in the Selectman's e-mail. The Depot tree lights are also getting a very positive response. This project required private fund raising. Everyone agreed it would be nice to add more for next year. Maybe businesses can sponsor a tree and we can expand beyond the Depot to New Preston and others such as the Mayflower. Dan Sherr said he would sponsor a tree in New Preston in back of the Smithy to be seen from 202. Michelle will discuss with New Preston business.
- b. WiFi QR code. Signs being made

6. Report of Selectmen and WBA

- a. Selectman- COVID still on the rise. Signs made by the recovery team were put around town to remind people of wearing masks and social distancing. Best practice is to quarantine if traveling and testing before and after.
- b. WBA- Julie King of Sotheby's joined to talk about real estate. Still have people looking for houses in Washington. They are interested in our schools. Jim asked if Real Estate agents meet together. Julie reported not on a strategic level. This led to a conversation on the problem people looking to downsize have finding housing in Washington. One of the zoning challenges is the moratorium on condominiums. Also discussed bringing back the welcome bags. Julie and Michelle will meet with WBA to figure out the logistics.

7. Adjournment: 11:04

Respectfully Submitted.

Michelle Gorra

(Mandy out on maternity. Congrats!)