

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Washington Economic Development Committee**

**Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 3:00 PM**

*Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee*

**Member Present:** Jim Brinton, Tony Bedini, Robyn Gray, Wayne Hileman, Kristen Atlas, Fran Keilty, Trisha McMahon

**Public:** Liz Fenton, Joan Lodsini

**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 Wayne seconded by Kristen to approve the minutes of Nov. 15, 2022. All in favor.
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
  - a. **New home owner mailings-** 5 in November
  - b. **Winter Tree Lights-** Project finished for this year. Thank you to the businesses and people who donated to that project. In the end we added 7 new trees to the original 4. There has been great feedback.
  - c. **Newsletter-** Winter edition went out the first week of December. Hope everyone received. Please let Michelle know if you did not. Next issue expected to go out the first week of March.
  - d. **Community Center programming committee survey-** The programming committee met over the summer and went on several tours of other community/senior centers. In October the committee put out a survey with the help of the graduate student working with them. There were over 200 responses and the results are posted on the EDC webpage under the Community Center tab on the left side.
  - e. **Welcome Center-** The new signs are up. The larger sign in the ground has the hours on it as well. Michelle has had two meetings with the Gunn Memorial Museum staff to work on selecting and locating pictures for the two historic displays.
  - f. **Arts Council-** There was great turnout for the ad hoc meeting. The director of the Northwest Arts Council joined the meeting and shared information on why it is important to have an arts council as well as sample bylaws. The mission statement that had been worked on was shared. Jay Hubelbank wanted to make sure the mission of the council was clear. The next step was for people to submit their names to the Board of Selectmen for consideration of appointment to the council. The Council will operate as a sub-committee of the EDC and Michelle will facilitate.
  - g. **Conferences-** Michelle attended the Western CT Tourism Board meeting in Torrington, the CT Economic Development Summit in New Haven and the COST Planning and Economic Development Conference at the Aqua Turf. Interesting information presented about state workforce development and upcoming transportation grants.
  - h. **Photo Contest-** The contest was a huge success. There were 68 submissions. The winners were given gift certificates from the Hickory Stick, The Pantry, Marty's and The Washington Food Market. We appreciate their generosity. We will be running the contest each season to gather a collection of photos to use in upcoming tourism outreach.
4. **New Business**
  - a. **Update on Broadband-** Wayne Hileman

CT got a grant for \$43 million to craft a plan for a broadband. The town would need a plan before applying for the money. This money is available now but it's tricky to get because it requires having a private provider to partner with and have to get a 25 percent buy in from the community. That's where we are at the state and federal level. On a local level, the town of Sharon does not have full coverage with 1 out of 7 homes not having access to cable. There are not enough people to make it worth the investment from the cable company. Comcast approached the town and said they are willing to partner with them. They'll string cable on the homes that don't have cable, the town pay 1.6 million dollars and Comcast will cover the rest. They took it to a town meeting and it passed. In several other towns, Frontier is stringing fiber in the towns and not asking for money for it, they're just stringing it in Winsted and Barkhamsted so far. Frontier has indicated they plan to come to Washington and stringing fiber. We do not know their specific plan of coverage yet. Jim is going to call them and get into more specifics on what roads and households etc.

5. Report of WBA and Selectmen on items not on the agenda.
  - a. **Selectmen**-The BOS received the final recommendations for the ARPA committee. \$600,000 worth of grants were recommended. The process is for the board of selectmen to discuss then make a recommendation to the board of finance and the auditor and then to a town meeting.
  - b. **Report from the WBA**- Holiday in the depot was a fantastic success, was extremely well attended, Jenn made some great changes to the structure, kudos to everyone who worked on this event, it was great.
6. Visitors- none
7. Adjournment- Motion to adjourn at 4:20 made by Wayne Hileman, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda Reale  
Selectman's Assistant

Recording

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvMqg1R6e-c>