

Town of Washington
Economic Development Committee

April 19,2022 - **Minutes**

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present: Jim Brinton, Michael Jackson, Robyn Gray, Fran Keilty

Public: Joan Lodsins, Chris Charles, Rebecca Rebillard, Liz Fenton, Rudy Montgelas, Julia Nable

Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. Call to order, 3:05
2. There was not a quorum so the approval of minutes will be moved to the next meeting.
3. Report on activities of the Economic and Community Development Coordinator:
 - 8 new home sales in March- Welcome letters will be sent.
 - Summer Newsletter deadline is May 16
 - Working on an inventory of businesses in the business districts. Looking to see how many properties in each district are not in commercial use. According to the POCD only 1.2% of Washington is zoned commercial.
 - Flemings Hidden Valley Restaurant is open and Norimaki is changing hands.
4. Old Business
 - a. Guidebook update- We are down to the final edits and should be ready for print this week. The WBA is going to finalize the number to be ordered and will work with SandorMax on the billing for the printing.
 - b. Welcome Center update- The water bottle filler is in and the Buildings and Property committee will work with the plumber to have it installed. Michelle shared the new mock up of the sign which incorporated all of the previous comments. No additional changes were suggested. Joan asked about the cleaning of the bathrooms. The increase in use may require more frequent cleaning. Michelle will discuss with Jim and will monitor.
5. New business-
 - a. SandorMax presentation on Explore website traffic.

Julia Nable shared a presentation on the recent performance of the Explore web-site as well as all the other social media platforms they are responsible for. Follow this link for full presentation.

https://www.washingtonct.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif1396/f/uploads/explore_washington_04-19-22_metrics_presentation.pdf

Highlights:

- Washington was featured in articles in Vogue, Yankee Magazine, CT Visit and several Gilmore Girls articles.
- We have 3,305 Instagram followers and 14,003 shared photos through #explorewashingtonct. An Instagram influencer visited Washington and posted a picture that had 6,862 likes. Clips of a video that was posted had 6,254 views.
- Facebook has 1,401 followers. This platform is used for town press releases.
- Mailchimp, which is used for the monthly e-newsletter, has 2,314 subscribers. An open rate of 32% is industry standard and ours was 56% for the last three months.
- The website traffic is up 32% over last year. There were 246,237 page views in 2021.

Rebecca asked how the contract with SandorMax is structured. It is a yearly contract that is billed quarterly. All work is included in the set fee. The only fees that change are subscription fees such as Mailchimp and web-site hosting.

6. Report of WBA & Selectmen on items not on the agenda.

Fran shared that the big WBA project is still the Guidebook. The WBA has a board meeting next week and planning for the June 3rd Block Party will get started soon.

Jim reminded us the sidewalk work in New Preston is set to start in May. There is money in next years capital budget for additional sidewalk work in the Depot.

7. Visitors had nothing to share.

8. Meeting adjourned at 3:55

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Gorra