

## TOWN OF WASHINGTON

### Washington Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 3:00 PM

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

**Member Present:** Robyn Gray, Kristen Atlas, Fran Keilty, Lisa Stein, Jim Brinton

**Public:** Joan Lodsins, ASAP Zakiya Scaramuzzino, Patrick Horan, Ann Jamieson, Liz Fenton, Leslie Anderson

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

1. **Call to order:** At 3:04 PM
2. **Approval of Minutes from June 2023 approved by Kristen seconded by Robyn Gray all in favor.**
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
  - a. **New Home Owner Mailings-** This July we had 3 home sales which is slower than typical. We're seeing a significant drop in home sales this year.
  - b. **Email Sign Ups** We also track the subscriptions to the weekly Selectmen's Email. This year in the June tax bills we added the weekly email info for the blast, got 53 new ones- 40 were new and 15 were duplicates. 1,337 people receiving the weekly email
  - c. **Newsletter** Should be in mailboxes September 1st – Going to have 19 or 20 articles in this one.
  - d. **Parking Signs-** We used our budget from last year to get some parking signs for the Depot, and some pedestrian signs also for the Depot and New Preston.
  - e. **Welcome Center-** Nothing new to report, same position it has been
  - f. **WBA Breakfast & Business** - Everyone is welcome, still continues.
  - g. **Harvest Fest-** Quickly approaching! The EDC has a table there where we will be collecting emails, going to be looking for volunteers to man the table. Last year was estimated we had around 3,000 people at the festival
  - h. **Arts Council-** Continuing to meet, they ran a logo contest and will pick a winner soon. Talking about the photo contest, "Washington through the seasons"
  - i. **New Business-** Connectivity grant for the sidewalk project for Titus, up to \$800,000 Grant from the DOT. Got some great letters of support, we also have a new business in town; Eckert Fine Art and Consulting, located at 10 Titus Road, an art consulting shop- Saturday, October 7th will be their grand opening
4. **New Business**
  - a. **Patrick Horan of Waldingfield Farm will share observations on foot traffic at Farmers Market-** Patrick stated, a decade ago the idea of doing a farmer's market in town wasn't something many people thought would work, Patrick included. But now he's humbled to say how well this market is doing. Patrick mentioned there's roughly \$200 -350,000 in sales going through the farmers market in that 24-week time the farmers market is open. Waldingfield's business has tripled since 2016. Patrick also noted that the town has turned into a summer economy. No one anticipated the market to become this popular, but because there's quality vendors and because this town has done a great job with making things accessible for customers. Fran agrees Saturday morning farmers markets are fun. It's a boom, and she has had a few people tell her

they no longer go to Litchfield or New Milford's market because of Washington's. Michelle and Fran agree we should refresh the Think Local campaign again sometime soon. Michelle mentioned we should do an article about how your dollar moves around and who it supports by shopping local. Liz shares the Farmers Market is fantastic, a huge uptake for the local businesses since the farmers market has started. Having the music atmosphere adds to the whole ambience and makes the whole thing more enjoyable for customers, and when the farmers market season is over then it's the holiday season which is great but then January- May is the slow season. Patrick thinks the Farmers market is 80 percent weekenders and 20 percent residents

**5. Old Business**

- a. **Update on house prices-** Pels sent Michelle a 12 month look of housing in Washington, the current year was \$1.9 Million for median sales. The average sale and median sale prices went up drastically from the last few years.

**6. Report of WBA & Selectmen on items not on the agenda-** Harvest Fest is coming up October 8th. Lisa mentioned they're making a poster too which people can purchase. Zeb Meyer will be doing that for us. Jim Brinton- We started a new fiscal year, been working with the engineers for the sidewalk and Titus block. Transfer Station, has had an amazing response, almost 7 tons to the glass- had to add an extra textile bin. We also now have 5 bins for composting foods.

**7. Visitors**

**8. Adjournment** 4:22 all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Amanda Reale*

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Selectman's Assistant

Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPmR96UC4z8>