

## TOWN OF WASHINGTON

### Washington Economic Development Committee/ Commission

Tuesday, September 19th, 2023 at 3:00 PM

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

**Member Present;** Trisha McMahon, Kristen Atlas, Fran Keilty, Robyn Gray, Wayne Hileman,

**Public:** Liz Fenton, Ann Jamieson

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

1. **Call to order:** Michelle Gorra called the meeting to order at 3:04
2. **Approval of August Meeting Minutes,** Trisha moved, Robyn seconded. All in favor.
3. **Report on activities of Economic and Community Development Coordinator**
  - a. **Summer Wrap- Up-** Robyn stated she thought it was a great busy summer but there was a lot going on this summer. Some of the events had conflicting times, and were right on the edge of too much.
  - b. **New Home Owner Mailings-** Michelle mentioned it's been a really slow year in July 3 home sales and August there were 11 which was our largest all year. Some sales in August were under \$500,000 so that was very exciting to see
  - c. **Email Sign Ups-** We received the cards from the tax bills, it was a huge success. There were over 100 new emails added to the selectmen's email blast
  - d. **Newsletter-** 12 pages again, we used to always be 8 pages. We'll have to budget accordingly moving toward and getting lots of requests from people to participate in the newsletter.
  - e. **Harvest Fest-** October 8th- planning for that, going to have a table and looking for volunteers to help man it.
  - f. **Arts Council-** Been very busy, they ran a successful logo contest. Lots of stuff happening there, doing an Art Show in the main hall of the town hall of all the submissions for the art contest
  - g. **Affordable Housing-** Michelle is working with an advisory committee of the affordable housing trusts and commissions of the northwest corner. The goal is to put together a guide book to guide the conversation, it's about outreach and how to get the message out and how to engage the community.
  - h. **Planning and POCD-** POCD due at the end of the year, first drafts are being put together, we'll have an opportunity to look at the draft to make sure we're on board with things happening, Draft Should be complete the first week of October. Once we have the draft it'll be on the Town Website. There will be a Public Hearing on the draft and comments will be received from the COG. It then goes to the Board of Selectmen for adoption.
  - i. **Winter lights-** Will happen again and it is time to start planning and fundraising.
  - j. **Fiber-** Wayne informed us that Frontier has delayed until 2024 for the hanging of fiber. The town is also getting WiFi out to the pavilion for the Harvest Fest as well as other events. WiFi in New Preston is on hold. The techs at EdAdvance think there might be a better way to do this once Frontier comes through.
4. **New Business**
  - a. **Harvest Fest Table, Oct 8, 12-5-** Michelle is planning on setting everything before she leaves on her trip, the Arts Council is going to share a table with the EDC. Planning on having a raffle so people can put their emails on the forms and then we'll choose a winner at random to draw a raffle. The winner will win a "Washington Basket" from local shops. Trisha mentioned the EDC should have a "what are we/ who are we" flier on the table at the festival.
  - b. **Washington through the Seasons Art Show Sept. 30 12-3-**It was an EDC contest in partnership with Julia at Explore, the idea was to get more photos of Washington, so when they're writing a blog they'll have a library of different photos they can use. Julia and the arts council thought it would be great to have a photo exhibit of all the entries, around 12 photos per season will be on display. This will take place in the main hall in the town hall. There should be good foot traffic in town at that time, we're going to invite

the artists to come. We would like to sell the photos, and will ask the photographers for their permission to sell. The proposal is to give them an option to sell price them all for \$50. Can split the commission 50/50 or to give the arts council. The arts council did get permission from the board of selectmen to set up an account so they can do fundraisers

5. Old Business

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

a. Winter Lights project is coming up- spoke with Barbra needs to get the committee together to see if more need to be ordered, need to start now for planning that and fundraising for it.

b. Liz mentioned maybe in the future we should reach out to the Library and they could speak with the EDC about what new updates and changes the library will have.

c. Kristen asked about hearing from the new businesses and how they are doing.

d. The Arts Council would like to have the depot and the green declared as a cultural district. There was also a discussion regarding the Welcome Center. We need to complete the awareness campaign.

e. The highway department put out the pedestrian signs throughout, town. Sadly, the one by the Supply didn't even make it half of a day before it got hit and broken.

f. Fran said for a future topic- Update with the Community Center- Michelle said it's not forgotten, it's just currently stalled, Michelle is having a meeting with the board of selectmen to discuss it.

g. Fran stated the WBA breakfasts at the Pantry currently aren't happening right now but Fran will report more about it at the next meeting when she gets some more info, right now the WBA is just focusing more on the Harvest Festival.

6. **Visitors-** no comments

7. **Adjournment; motion made by Fran at 4:05pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Reale

Recording

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwLB663AS64>