

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Washington Economic Development Committee

Tuesday September 21, 2021 at 3:00 pm in person and virtual

Minutes are subject to approval of the Economic Development Committee

Members Present -Daniel Sherr, Michael Jackson, Robyn Gray, Wayne Hilleman

Public: Susan Branson, Chris Charles, Joan Lodsins, Carole Matteo, Jay Hubelbank, Kristen Atlas, Julia Nable

Michelle Gorra- Economic and Community Development Coordinator

1. **Call to Order:** Michelle Gora called the meeting to order at 3:05
2. Motion was made to approve the minutes of July 20, 2021 by Dan Sherr Seconded by Robyn Gray, unanimously approved
3. **Report on Activities of Economic and Community Dev Coordinator**

Affordable Housing. The plan draft is completed and is being reviewed. The plan is to present it at a Public Hearing during the October 6 Planning Commission meeting

Sustainable CT- Still waiting to hear if we pass certification. In the Fall the EDC can discuss priorities for next steps in the categories of “Thriving Local Economies”, “Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems” and “Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education”

New Preston Sidewalks- On hold due to the granite curbing being on backorder. Hoping to start early Spring.

Titus Concept Plan- The meeting with the businesses went well and the engineers are working on a concept. The goals are to meet again with the businesses in October to go over a first draft.

New Home Mailing- July 5 letters and August 3 letter were sent. House sales are slowing down

4. **New Business; Julia Nable Summer Recap on Explore Washington-**

- Made a print postcard that was sent out all around town, and it was a huge success, people picked them up left and right to check off the check list of the events going on in town.
- July 2021 was the highest page views Explore Washington has had with 33,500 views
- Almost 3,000 followers on Instagram and even more shared posts (12,000) with the hashtag #explorewashington
- CT Visit mentioned Washington 44 times recently
- Yankee Magazine Featured Washington in “31 perfect fall days”
- Start thinking of ideas for the holidays; bring back Shop Washington slogan, could put a twist on it, or something new

Summer Communication Survey- Michelle-

- Trying to reach people who are not typically connected to people who know what’s happening in town, went out with a clipboard to try and see where people in town get their information about what’s happening in town.
- Went to the playground, Parks and Rec Camp drop off; people get most of their information about what’s happening in town from word of mouth, the explore Washington website, and the selectmen’s weekly email and flyers around town

Zoning Commission, Business District changes- Wayne and Michelle

- Have split lots in town, part in the business district other portion in residential district. In The Depot & Woodville business districts the zoning commission is able to provide a waiver under special permit process allowing an entire parcel that is a split lot to be used for commercial purposes.
- The Planning Commission asked that the same allowance be extended to New Preston and Marbledale Business districts.
- The zoning commission has proposed other changes as well as is having a public hearing on September 27th. Both Michelle and Wayne have written letters and plan to attend.

Shepaug Valley Children's Center

- Put out a survey about the need for childcare from birth to age 3.
- Had 106 respondents
- Need to find engineers to evaluate the building to convert to childcare
- The responses were remarkable, had more people interested childcare than we would have capacity for which tells us there is definitely a need for childcare in town.

Preliminary Census Data-

- The population went up from 3,758 people in 2010 to 3646 people in 2020
- Most alarming data in this census is the number of housing units went down 3.2% (68 housing units) According to our local land use records we created 77 new housing units from 2009 to 2019, if this figure is correct we "lost" 145 housing units.

5. Old Business

- **Kiosk-** Would like to put together a small committee to put together designs for an informational kiosk in the depot
- Was thinking in front of the town hall where the bushes used to be where they cleared it

Report of WBA & Selectmen on items not on the agenda-

Met with Lisa the WBA put together the welcome bags. In the welcome bag is the passport, the town services guide. They are being distributed through two local realtors.

Met with Lisa and Liz and looking to put together a plan this year for the depot lights, the lights are currently on back order.

Visitors

Adjournment- at 4:35

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Reale

Selectmen's Assistant