

WOODSTOCK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DRAFT MINUTES

DATE: Thursday, August 27 th , 2015		TIME: 7:00 – 8:40 p.m.	PLACE: Woodstock Town Hall meeting room (upstairs)
<p>MEMBERS PRESENT: Gail Childs, Matt Stover, Nick Ferro, Joe DiNatale, Charlie Kimbell, Tom Weschler, Keith Anderson, Barry Milstone. Members Absent: James Zilian. Guests: Jeff Zayas, President of Woodstock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.</p>			
AGENDA ITEM		DECISIONS	
1. Review Minutes of Last Meeting		Tom Weschler moved that the minutes of the August 6 th meeting be approved. Joe DiNatale seconded. Minutes were accepted by a voice vote.	
2. Review Strategic Goals Agreed to at 8/6 Meeting.		<p>Charlie Kimbell presented a handout to reaffirm the strategic goals and metrics agreed to in the previous meeting. The group agreed to the following wording for the two overarching strategic goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow and diversify the resident population to enrich the community and the quality of life. 2. Increase the number of visitors who are most likely to develop connections to the area and contribute to the economy. <p>Regarding metrics, the group discussed the previously selected metrics and decided the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The occupancy rate at the Woodstock Inn is more of an explanation of the changes in the tax revenues collected in the town and should not be a key metric. b. The 10 year gap in the U.S. census makes it very difficult to measure short term or intermediate impact on population. Instead, we should look to more obtainable information such as registered voters. <p>Until we add more metrics, the key indicators are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Increase in tax revenues from rooms, meals, alcohol and sales. ii. # of visitors to the Woodstock Welcome Center. iii. Woodstock Elementary School enrollment. iv. # of housing units occupied by full time residents. <p>The metrics will have relevance only when looking at the trends of Woodstock’s own experience and when compared to regional and national trends and against other, benchmark communities such as Stowe or Manchester in Vermont.</p>	
3. Develop a list of activities in which to engage to achieve the goals.		1. Engage a PR firm to produce and promote stories about Woodstock to regional and national audiences. Keith Anderson shared how a PR firm could work with the commission. Much discussion ensued and Keith offered to invite two PR firms he knows to meet with the commission and discuss what is possible. The group agreed	

	<p>that after that discussion is held then the commission can draft an RFP to send to PR firms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Convert prospective residents. Matt Stover shared the concept of organizing a “prospect conversion” group that can focus on responding to inquiries about moving to Woodstock. There was much discussion around the types of efforts that could be employed, including publishing brochures to distribute to guests at B&Bs and other businesses, online marketing, etc. Matt agreed to organize this effort. 3. Fund special events to bring new visitors to town. A lively discussion around the effectiveness of bringing visitors to Woodstock in the shoulder seasons ensued. Charlie offered to share the guidelines developed by the Town of Dover with which they review funding requests for special events. It was discussed that these events would come out of the money allocated for promotion. Nick Ferro is very interested in this area. 4. Fund community projects. It was pointed out that we have not discussed this entire area yet. Barry Milstone offered to host a meeting to brainstorm on the community projects that could be considered. Ones mentioned were eliminating the parking meters, providing better signs for welcoming visitors to the town of Woodstock. 5. Liaise with Community Groups: The relationship with the chamber was widely discussed, particularly the interest in the prospect conversion aspect of the website. Tom Weschler suggested that there may be a way for the EDC to contract with the Chamber for services. Jeff Zayas wanted clarification on many points raised during the discussion. It was agreed that a group of EDC members should focus on working with other community groups. Tom Weschler and Joe DiNatale expressed interest in that. <p>The commission agreed that it needed to stay focused so as to get some things accomplished in the near future. Funding from the collection of the 1% local options tax is not expected to be received until mid-November. The board concluded that it needed to have plans in place before then, reviewed by the Council and the SelectBoard.</p>
<p>3. Other business.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the meeting, Joe DiNatale shared that he felt that there is a prevailing, negative attitude in the community towards change and new things, and he would like to do something about that. He cited resistance to a local biking event. Others in the commission shared his frustration and want to be able to do something about it.</p> <p>Jeffrey Zayas, local merchant and President of the Chamber of Commerce, offered his input on many issues during the meeting. The Chamber of Commerce is holding a community</p>

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	meeting on 9/17 from 6-7pm at the Woodstock Inn to reveal the new web-site.
4. Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.
ACTION ITEMS Charlie Kimbell to forward event funding criteria used by Town of Dover. Barry Milstone offered to hold a meeting on the subject of community projects before the next meeting.	
Next EDC Meeting: Thursday, September 3rd, 2015.	