WOODSTOCK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISION DRAFT MINUTES

DATE: Thursday, August 6th, 2015	**TIME:** 7:00 – 8:40 p.m.	**PLACE:** Woodstock Town Hall meeting room (upstairs)

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gail Childs, Matt Stover, James Zillian, Nick Ferro, Joe DiNatale, Charlie Kimbell, Tom Weschler
Members Absent: Keith Anderson, Barry Milstone.
Guests: Jeff Zayas, President of Woodstock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Beth Finlayson, Exec. Director of Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, Gary Thulander, President and General Manager of Woodstock Resort Corp and Board Member of the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce.

AGENDA ITEM	DECISIONS
1. Review Minutes of Last Meeting	Tom Weschler moved that the minutes of the July 16th meeting be approved. Charlie Kimbell seconded. Minutes were accepted by a voice vote.
2. Review Marketing Plan from Woodstock Chamber of Commerce	Beth Finlayson reviewed the community branding process begun in 2013 and expected to be complete by the end of August. She presented to the commission the description of the target audience for Woodstock: **Project Objective** Woodstock wants to build a **brand identity** that differentiates the Village/Town from other places in a meaningful way. A meaningfully different identity is something that can be used to attract visitors to the area, to attract people to live and work here and that the community can embrace. **Issues** 1. Right now we have many different "looks" used by different enterprises and no Woodstock brand identity. There are many different ideas of what Woodstock is/should be/could be. 2. Right now there is not a centrally funded marketing budget. Each enterprise is responsible for its own marketing. The Chamber has minimal resources for their current marketing efforts including website and event promotion. 3. We need to get people to work together to support their own brand identity and the Woodstock Brand. 4. Determining a target audience is not easy. There are many different target markets for the different businesses and institutions and they may not be representative of who is in Woodstock today. **Target** Our target is people that add to the economy and vitality of our community. Our primary target that we want to attract as visitors to the area (and ultimately as residents) are not described by one age or income or family size group but have some characteristics we can describe. *Where do they live?* They live within 4 to 6 hours driving time of Woodstock…. Connecticut, New York, Boston, Montréal, New Jersey, Philadelphia

What do they like to do?
They enjoy taking trips and vacations (weekend escapes, family vacations, taking part in sporting events, hiking) to new and repeat destinations. They are educated and enjoy spending when they travel on the place they stay, their food, activities or shopping. They are looking for a variety of things to do.
What are they looking for in choosing a destination?
They are looking for a place with natural beauty, a sense of place with roots, history, heritage, character and a welcoming community that offers the amenities of the modern world with a simplicity/purity that they can't get from their everyday life.
How can we describe them?
They have or are developing an affinity with Vermont.
They are people for whom a sense of place and community and family is important.
They are independent minded, entrepreneurial, progressive.
They may be interested in their environment and are socially conscious.
They are adventurous – that may be expressed with food, sports or just exploring
- for example trying new foods, trying new restaurants with local foods or participating in sporting events and activities.

They are looking for a place to escape and to disconnect from their everyday life.

The Desired Output
The ideal output is a **brand identity** (words and graphical treatment) that
1. sets Woodstock apart from other places in a clearly identifiable, meaningful way that is easy for the target market to understand.

will be used by different enterprises in their own promotion, website and other communication material

James Zillian shared the new website for the Chamber of Commerce that is soon to go live.

Beth shared the specific advertising initiatives the Chamber is involved in to draw visitors to events in Woodstock. The budget is limited. The main vehicle is NPR radio stations.

In the next couple of weeks the Chamber will announce their guiding marketing plan which includes artwork and tag lines that Chamber Members can utilize. The assets will be licensed by the chamber to others to make products for sale. The purpose is to provide members and non-member organizations with a consistent look to incorporate in their marketing efforts.

	The discussion that followed covered the following topics: - Commission members pointed out that the EDC mission also included increasing permanent residents and not just increasing tourism. Chamber board members said that is important to the chamber as well and will be incorporated into the website. - Is there enough time and resources to try to accomplish both of those things? - Is the EDC going to fund projects such as the East End revitalization?
3. Discussion of Goals and Objectives for EDC: Long term, short term, metrics. a. Increase targeted tourism b. Increase permanent residents	Charlie Kimbell presented to the group some specific metrics that can be incorporated to measure the effectiveness of the EDC's efforts in support of the two strategic goals: Increase tourism and grow and diversify the resident population. The goal was to identify those metrics at the top level before deciding the specific activities in which to engage. Kimbell stressed that the goals needed to be "SMART." Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound. After a spirited discussion, the commission concluded on the following long term measurements to determine success in our efforts: (Year over Year trends, regional benchmarks) 1. Increase in tax revenues from rooms, meals, alcohol and sales. 2. # of visitors to the Woodstock Welcome Center. 3. Occupancy rate at the Woodstock Inn. 4. # of full time residents. 5. Woodstock Elementary School enrollment. 6. # of housing units occupied by full time residents Other metrics were suggested that would indicate the success of our efforts in the short term: # of visits to the Woodstock Chamber website, # of inquiries about relocation to the area.
4. Other business.	Nick Ferro shared his response to a derogatory letter to the editor that appeared in the Valley News and the Vermont Standard.
5. Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.
ACTION ITEMS	
Next EDC Meeting: Tuesday, August 18th, 7pm. Select activities to drive changes in the metrics.	