

Woodstock Economic Development Commission Application for Community Project Grant

Name of Project: Wireless Woodstock

Start Date: _____

Description:

Wireless Woodstock is an information access service built and maintained by the local community of Woodstock, Vermont.

This service is designed to be the altruistic means for our community to communicate to local residents and visitors alike. Our open, free network operates in good faith that all users will respect the service - using it for modest, community-friendly purposes. In addition to providing wi-fi Internet connectivity, our system maintains and displays a website to all users that acts as a digital "town crier" to give users a sense of what is the latest "news and goings on" in the Village and Town that very day.

The original hardware and software was originally donated to the Norman Williams Public Library, and access to the service, operations and information provided has been overseen by various constituents throughout the area community. An oversight committee of several local professional networkers will champion the new system, all of its activity, and will guide the activities of both the WUHS students and Sustainable Woodstock volunteers to ensure operational continuity and current content. Information regarding content and use will be published periodically in the Vermont Standard.

Wireless Woodstock was initiated in 2011, and ceased operation in May 2016 for lack of funds. This project plans to re-invigorate it, expanding coverage, ensuring stable operation and current content, with significantly increased visibility.

Funds are requested to double the number of wireless access points in Woodstock and to provide basic maintenance and operation of the system for the next five years.

Total Project Budget: \$9,000

Funded by private donations to SW: \$3,000

Grant Request: \$ 6,000

Applicant Information:

Name of Project Coordinator : Townsend Belisle

Name of Organization/Business: Sustainable Woodstock

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Organization background:(i.e. year founded, principals, mission, event organizing experience. Attach additional information if necessary);

Wireless Woodstock was founded in 2011 through private contributions to the Norman Williams Public Library, which acted as the implementing organization.

Business Address: _ Woodstock VT

Telephone Number: (802) 457-7140
Contact's Email Address: t@haystackneedle.com
Organization's Website URL: sustainablewoodstock.org
Organization's EIN: .

Your answers to the following questions will help the EDC evaluate your grant application according to the published funding rubric. Please be as succinct as possible while still supporting your answer:

1. How does the proposed project improve the quality of life for all Woodstock residents and visitors?

It provides Internet connectivity for residents, including students, to connect to the world. It provides a friendly interface for visitors to connect to the Woodstock environment, to inquire about lodging, services, and events happening in Woodstock. It will encourage and enable increased local-visitor interaction.

2. How does the proposed project enhance the beauty of Woodstock?

The project encourages visitors and residents alike to linger in our central spaces and enjoy the beauty that already exists. The network access devices are small and unobtrusive and are for the most part housed by businesses and organizations that donate a part of their bandwidth at no cost to the network.

3. In what way will the proposed project contribute to the Woodstock's economic vitality?

Increased Internet access is a driver of business and economic development. Lack of Internet access throughout the town is likely to become a depressant of economic activity and create a view of Woodstock as isolated in terms of modern communications. U.S. business is increasingly shifting toward knowledge-based industries, with their higher revenue potential and increasing independence of location. People and businesses will choose to locate in towns

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that have and are working toward greater Internet connectivity. Both Bridgewater and Hartland have Internet connectivity much superior to Woodstock. While we are working with ECFiber to provide high bandwidth connections throughout Woodstock, we do not have to wait to improve connectivity in the central business district, where it can be visible and useful to town residents and visitors alike.

Signs in the windows of each merchant that offers Wireless Woodstock access, with complementary publicity, will encourage visitors to stop and linger and take advantage of the free Internet connectivity.

4. Does the event have broad-based private sector, public, community, or local support?

Wireless Woodstock has been supported by the Norman Williams Public Library, which provides primary Internet bandwidth for it. It is also supported through the cooperation of merchants and others, who agree to house an access point and divert a part of their existing Internet bandwidth for use by Wireless Woodstock users external to their premises. It is strongly supported by ICT and networking professionals in town that regard additional Internet access as necessary for the town's economic prosperity

5. Will the proposed project attract new residents to Woodstock?

It has in the past, and will likely continue to do so. Most people moving to Vermont, in fact moving anywhere, are going to look at Internet availability as an increasingly necessary thing to have. While Wireless Woodstock does not provide Internet to the home, it does provide a friendly Internet environment for visitors. For example, having Internet on the Green and in the center of town allows vendors to execute online financial transactions, a sign that the town is Internet aware and friendly.

Visitors to Wireless Woodstock are presented with a friendly menu of choices that highlight current activities in Woodstock and core information about the town.

6. Does the organization have other funding sources (including self-generated or organization funds)?

The project actually started in 2010, when the Norman Williams Public Library solicited funds from private individuals to purchase the initial network access points and deploy them in central Woodstock. The library received about \$10,000 in contributions and, with donated technical help, deployed the original system, consisting of five centrally located access points.

Going forward Sustainable Woodstock has agreed to take over administrative management of the project, working with a small committee of locals intent on not just sustaining the system, but growing it over time.

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7. Does the project have adequate funding for now and future years?

The funding requested is adequate for now. Additional funding will be required only if the existing network is to be expanded to install additional network access points in central locations not yet served by the existing access points. This will be highly desirable, but is not necessary to reactivate the existing access points. Reactivation of the management contract with Meraki Technology will, however, be necessary to have the access points operate as an integrated system.

Did you:

a. Attach any supporting information?

Yes. Attached are monthly reports of Wireless Woodstock usage for July, August and September 2015. They demonstrate a high level of usage of the system.

b. Include a budget for the event?

Yes. The budget consists of the following items.

Upfront Capital:

- A 5-year license for the existing 6 APs, all Meraki technology	\$3,000
- A per-unit cost for 6 additional APs purchased for the same term at \$500/unit	3,000
- An upfront consulting cost to ensure proper setup, alerts and training	2,500
- Signage, publicity, instructional material	500

Annual Support

- A support block (12 hours/year, pre-paid) to assist with advanced troubleshooting	\$4,000
- Local hosting partners cover electricity and ISP costs	

Hence, we conservatively estimate \$9,000 to cover upfront/initial needs adequately, and an on-going annual budget of \$4,000 to keep the system maintained (accounts for both the annual amortized collection of future licensing and expansion of 1-2 units/year).

Submitted by: (First and Last Name) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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