

Woodstock Economic Development Commission

1/7/2016 Meeting

7:00pm – 9:00pm

Town Hall, Woodstock, Vermont

MINUTES - DRAFT

1) Call to Order: 6:00pm

Commissioners in Attendance: Joe DiNatale, Barry Milstone, Matt Stover, Nick Ferro, Tom Weschler, Charlie Kimbell, James Zillian. Absent: Gail Childs, Keith Anderson.

Public in Attendance: Dave Brown, Ron Miller, Beth Finlayson, Jen Belton, Sally Miller, Aidan Saunders.

2) Citizen Comments:

David Brown offered comments on the content of the RFI that was issued by the EDC soliciting information from Telecommunication Companies regarding establishing 1 Gbps broadband service to every home and business in Woodstock. He offered suggestions on the wording in order to obtain accurate responses.

Beth Finlayson told the commission that Conde Nast magazine has just named Woodstock the number 1 small town to visit in the US. This is a huge PR win for the town.

Ron Miller and Jen Belton presented the idea to create “April in Woodstock,” a promotion of existing events and cultural offerings in the Woodstock area. Knowing that they missed the deadline for funding applications, they sought feedback on the concept of the event.

Beth Finlayson presented the “Maple Madness” event that is to take place April 2-3 in Woodstock. Also aware that the application missed the deadline, she sought feedback on the eligibility of the event for funding.

3) Approve Minutes of the 12/3/2015 meeting. Tom Weschler moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Matt Stover. Approved by voice vote.

4) Updates on Existing Initiatives

a) RFI for Telecommunications Services: Charlie Kimbell shared with the commission that the RFI that was created using resources suggested by TRORC had been distributed to five TELCOs: Sovernet, Comcast, VTel, Fairpoint and EC Fiber. All but EC Fiber had expressed interest in responding to the RFI by the deadline (February 15th).

b) RFP for PR Firm: Charlie reported that Keith Anderson has drafted a press release to get more interest in the RFP. It was discussed that the best pool of PR firms is the ones that had responded to the State of Vermont’s RFP for many of the same types of initiatives.

c) Parking Study – Next Steps

Barry Milstone presented a summary of his work to date and suggested that the next steps are to present the results of his work (survey of Village businesses regarding parking, analysis of all

previous parking studies, consultation with parking experts and other communities) to the Village Trustees, as parking is ultimately their purview. Nick Ferro volunteered to attend a meeting on 1/21 with the Woodstock Police Chief to review a new meter format to consider.

d) Lead Conversion

Matt Stover reported on the imminent launch of the lead capture forms appended to the Chamber of Commerce web-site, coordinating his efforts with the staff at the Chamber of Commerce.

5) Review Funding Applications.

Prior to reviewing the applications, the commission discussed the decision making process. The consensus was that the commission by vote could take one of four actions: Approve the request and present it to the Woodstock Selectboard, Amend the request and present that to the Woodstock Selectboard, Table the request for consideration at some other time, or deny the request.

a) East End Base Map- Sustainable Woodstock: Sally Miller represented Sustainable Woodstock.

It was moved by Barry Milstone and seconded by Matt Stover to approve the \$12,000 request to create an East End Developer Package. The commission clarified that the Town would own the developer package and that Sustainable Woodstock needs to ask the land owners to contribute funds towards the expense as a condition of approval. The motion was approved by voice vote.

b) Village Waste Receptacles – Sustainable Woodstock. Sally Miller represented Sustainable

Woodstock. Joe DiNatale recused himself from the discussion and the vote because his daughter had completed the application package. Tom Weschler moved to table the request, Matt Stover seconded. Members of the commission expressed concern that this expense should be in the Village budget, that it was a large request, that its impact on economic development was not clear. The motion to table was approved by voice vote.

c) Woodstock Short Film – Aidan Saunders presented the concept for his narrative film to help promote Woodstock in a captivating way. Members of the commission voiced support for his initiative and concept, and that it might fit in nicely with the direction of a PR firm once hired. Matt Stover moved to Table, Tom Weschler seconded. Motion to table was approved by voice vote.

d) Village Flower Baskets/Civic Beautification: Beth Finlayson presented the request of \$6,200 for the funding of flower baskets in the Village. The commission raised concerns about it becoming an annual request, something the commission had decided it did feel was appropriate for the use of the options tax funds. The commission expressed its interest in contributing in some way. Matt Stover moved that \$1,000 be allocated. Seconded by Nick Ferro. In discussion, a friendly amendment was made to increase the amount to \$2,000 which was accepted. The motion to approve \$2,000 was approved by voice vote.

e) Woodstock Welcome Signs – Woodstock EDC. The commission discussed the information available from the 9/22/2015 written quote from Vermont Hand Carved Signs. After discussing the cost of developing high quality signs as experienced by some of the commission members, the motion was made to table the request until additional information could be obtained. The point was also made that the process of approving even one sign in the past was quite difficult

and there needed to be greater community involvement before allocating the funds. The motion to table was made by Matt Stover, seconded by Joe DiNatale. The motion to table was approved by voice vote.

- f) Woodstock PR Services – Woodstock EDC. Charlie offered that since the EDC did not have written responses to the RFP and no real figures to approve that this not be taken up at this time.

The two funding requests that were approved at the meeting are to be presented at the Selectboard Meeting on 1/19/2016. Any EDC members able to attend are encouraged to do so.

6) Other Business

Matt Stover suggested that the EDC meet the following week to discuss the two late requests delivered during Citizen Comments in order to fund events happening in April during a traditionally slow, shoulder season. Commissioners agreed to meet on 1/12/2016 at the Woodstock Town Hall at 6pm.

7). Motion to Adjourn: 9pm.