

Woodstock Economic Development Commission

Draft Minutes

October 4, 2018

Commissioners present: Courtney Lowe, Julia Cooke, Joe DiNatale, Jon Spector, Michael Malik, Barry Milstone

Commissioners absent: Charlie Kimbell, Jason Merrill, Mica Seely

Others Present: Sally Miller, Rachel Gardner, Sarah Long, Virginia Dean, Ray Bourgeois, Michael Caduto, David Brown, Keri Bristow, Anke Stickney, Jane Lackey, Kim Lackley, Chris Miller, Mary Riley, Matt Powers, Beth Finlayson

I. Call to Order

Ms. Cooke called the meeting to order at 7:02.

II. Citizen Comments

Matt Powers requested that the EDC please update their page on the town website.

III. Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Spector, seconded by Mr. Malik, the minutes of September 6 to approve with one correction (Rainbow Playschool total budget is \$750,000.) All approved.

IV. Grant Presentations

Ms. Cooke explained the process. After these presentations, the EDC Economic Resources committee will review all the grants and gather any additional information. They will make recommendations for approval at the November EDC meeting.

EC Fiber, Outreach - David Brown presented the status of EC Fiber outreach efforts in Woodstock. Without demand from local people, EC Fiber will not come to Woodstock in the near future. Previous outreach campaigns – direct mail (\$7,000) and door-to-door – were not effective. Current campaign will advertise in the Vermont Standard and communicate updated construction process.

Doing nothing means no EC Fiber in the near future. With community interest Woodstock could be part of the third traunch which starts in January. Fourth traunch is 18 months later.

Sustainable Woodstock, Green Bags/ Outreach - Michael Caduto presented. Change the World Kids will be a direct partner and help with outreach and distribution. They have found additional bag types which are lower carbon footprint. Sample bag was shown. The goal is to reduce plastic bags, not eliminate.

Ms. Cooke stated that it seems like a lot of staffing for this project. Mr. Caduto said that it is also for program support, too.

Mr. Spector suggested just getting 1,000 bags and giving them away. It would save the staffing costs. Mr. Malik wanted to keep it local somehow.

Discussion about the graphics on the bag. Mr. Milstone wants to see the Town of Woodstock on the bag. Mr. Lowe suggested that businesses have incentive to utilize bags. Are there matching grants at state level?

Mr. DiNatale questioned the economic development impact.

Jane Lackley, WUHS Apparel – Ms. Jane Lackley presented the background of the project. They hope to purchase different inventory. The products help with the visibility of the school; the merchandise promotes school spirit and will help promote Woodstock itself. The project will help young people have a voice and get involved in the community. They may give a percentage of proceeds to a local organization. It's set up like a business; they do Square Point of Sale.

Mr. DiNatale sees opportunity for young people to run business. Mr. Malik likes that it will be made available to everyone.

Some discussion about the change of the WUHS logo.

Woodstock Christian Child Care, Expand Infant Care. Ms. Bristow presented. She is currently on board and was a founding member. With publically funded preschool, there are less expensive options for that age, but the real need is the infant care. They get calls regularly and have a waiting list.

The grant is for the cost of changing a room to infant care. The state is not funding these types of programs. They plan on soft opening for Summer 2019, definitely Fall 2019.

Mr. Spector wondered who is on the list. Are they living here now? Some do, some from away. He also asked if it is a non-denominational program, would it be possible to change the name? It's an open door program, but under the First Congregational Church so not able to change the name.

Wayne Thompson, Public Art. This proposal was withdrawn because they did not get all the permissions needed.

Ms. Cooke opened for general discussion to see if the commission wanted to put a process in place for this type of a project. Mr. DiNatale sees it as revitalization.

Some discussion about the vacant lot wall. Some commissioners like the look of the "blank" wall (has beautiful stonework) and suggested the brick wall on the alley to the Visitor's Center instead.

They also questioned the value of artwork that would eventually be covered.

Town of Woodstock, Village Green Lighting. Mr. Miller presented. He acted as a volunteer consultant for lighting for the Village for many years. The committee worked with Gary Thulander from the Woodstock Inn. They did mock ups and samples. The Town approved the project thinking that all the funds were in place. The lights will improve the aesthetic quality of the Green.

Mr. DiNatale updated on the funding.

Mr. Lowe stated that originally the Inn was supplying the electrical work, but they lost their Master Electrician and can't donate that piece.

Ms. Cooke want to know what the schedule is. Ms. Finlayson stated that the lights are already here.

Mr. Spector said the EDC should think about things that the Town should pay for as opposed to items that the EDC should pay for. This is a principle thing. He wanted to call notice to it so it can be decided what is an appropriate EDC project.

Ms. Riley said that this is the last request for this project. No disrespect for due process was intended.

An EDC decision needs to be on Select board agenda. Discussion about process and timeline.

Mr. DiNatale made a motion to table the request.

The EDC will have a special meeting to vote on the request. Additional information will be collected prior to that meeting. Ms. Miller will get it on the SB agenda for the November meeting.

Later in the meeting Ms. Riley mentioned that Phil Swanson did get other bids for the electrical work. The timeframe is late October, early November.

V. Financial Report

Ms. Miller commented on budget report which shows grants awarded to date.

VI. Chairman Report

Nothing to report. This item will be deleted from future agendas.

VII. Coordinator Report

Ms. Miller added that the Municipal Planning Grant went out on Monday. A pre-application for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is due October 15.

She had an email conversation with Ellaway Property about 49 Central. Everyone is asking; they don't know anything. There is nothing to report, and don't expect anything until the insurance claim is settled.

Housing survey should be out in the next couple of weeks.

VIII. General EDC updates

a. Promotion / Website

Mr. Lowe reported on website updates. No great solution for calendar integration, so will work with the current calendar which is getting better. The Community Website committee will keep looking for other solutions.

They have added an availability calendar which is liked by smaller inns; they will pay an \$85 annual fee.

They are currently working with Origin for a maintenance and enhancement proposal \$1,200 monthly fee for a six-month contract.

Blogs are going well with good variety. Katie Berdan is doing well. She has updated the schools page and is working on other pages. Ms. Cooke met with her and is very impressed. She represents the “young family” and provides good content from that perspective. The website and newsletter are a resource for locals as well as tourists.

The website committee still doesn't have a sales person, but they are looking at a solution.

They would like to see how the website compares with other communities, but most don't like to share.

b. Economic Resources

Mr. Milstone presented. Storefront Incentive was approved by SB. Mr. DiNatale wondered why we are giving money away without recipients needing to come to meeting. Mr. Milstone explained that tried to create an administrative program, so they don't need to come to meetings and can get money quickly. Mr. DiNatale says that every dollar has been approved directly to date. Why not in this case? Ms. Cooke said it was to make the process easier and less intimidating. Mr. Spector feels we need to stay within due process which is in place. Ms. Cooke reported that the Economic Resources committee met with Visioning Committee and asked for more information and will present more fully at the next meeting.

Mr. Milstone also talked about committing to more outreach for EDC. The members should think about what it looks like and when it happens.

Mr. Milstone talked with high school to fill store fronts with art. It's not able to happen now, but he is looking for other options.

c. Civic Revitalization

Ms. Miller has been in touch with Dubois and King and will help coordinate near future steps.

d. Recreation Assets

Mr. Malik reported on River Loop trail. Ms. Miller reported on the Land and Water Conservation Grant pre-application due October 15.

VIII. Other Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Adjournment

On a motion from Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Spector seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Miller
EDC Coordinator
October 9, 2018