

Woodstock Economic Development Commission

Draft Minutes

December 6, 2018

Commissioners present: Charlie Kimbell, Julia Cooke, Joe DiNatale, Jon Spector, Mica Seely,

Commissioners absent: Courtney Lowe, Barry Milstone, Michael Malik, one vacancy

Others Present: Sally Miller, Macy Lawrence, Ray Bourgeois, Christian Avard, Jill Davies, Mary Riley,
Beth Finlayson

I. Call to Order

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

II. Citizen Comments

None.

III. Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Ms. Seely, seconded by Mr. Spector, the minutes of November 1 were approved.

IV. Grant Discussions

Woodstock Christian Child Care, Expand Infant Care.

The discussion had been continued from the November meeting so that the Resources Committee could craft a motion. Ms. Cooke presented the motion, "Per EDC granting guidelines, which exclude "fraternal or religious groups with proposals that promote an individual doctrine," grant funds will be used only for the purchase of non-religious materials in support of the infant care program, or labor to support the infrastructure therein. None of the funds shall be used to promote religion, worship, or instruction." Their grant request is \$5,000. After further discussion the motion was moved by Ms. Seely and seconded by Mr. Spector. All approved.

V. Financial Report

Mr. Spector explained that the Commission is waiting for additional information to track progress, but the EDC should explain to community about the fund.

1. It is growing nicely
2. The EDC is spending the money now
3. The fund is probably at 50% for FY2019
4. It still has a balance, by end of June 2019 will have a balance of \$400K (same is first year.)

VI. Coordinator Report

Ms. Miller reported that Woodstock received the Municipal Planning Grant to update the 2000 Riverwalk Plan. Ms. Cooke summarized the Coordinator's report.

VII. General EDC updates

a. Promotion / Website

Ms. Cooke reported on website committee work – mostly dealing with new MOU which will need to be approved by EDC and Select Board. She reported that have been some amazing comments on Katie's emails which are successful in working within the fine line between information and marketing.

There are metrics that look at site traffic and open rates. Mr. Spector asked to get that information.

Discussion on the MOU was postponed to the end of the meeting so that the commission could into Executive Session to discuss the contract.

b. **Economic Resources**

The Committee didn't meet this month, but there has been some discussion to split into two groups. One for grants and one for new businesses. Mr. DiNatale expressed interest in the second committee. Only one grant writing workshop will be held in January. Ms. Miller asked that Commissioners review the new grant application and guidelines which hopefully will make it less intimidating and clarify what information is needed. Ideally the new documents will get posted to the Town website in the next week.

c. **Civic Revitalization**

Mr. DiNatale reported that the business owners meeting was well attended and he was pleased with the response. At the November Select Board meeting he asked for an extension of the Dubois & King contract. Question was whether they met their contractual obligations. At the August SB meeting, D&K thought they were asked to do a detailed sidewalk report (which was out of the scope of the initial work.) Ms. Seely explained she wasn't following through with them, and D&K's "little bit of data" was more than anticipated.

Ms. Cooke asked:

1. Did they submit something to the SB in a timely manner?
2. Did they ask for more money to do the sidewalk work?
3. Is there room for negotiation?

Ms. Seely thought that D&K did what they thought was the desired direction. Mr. DiNatale said that if we stop now we don't have a complete report.

Disappointment was expressed that D&K didn't let the EDC know that the scope had changed and they wouldn't be able to complete report.

Ms. Davies wanted to know if the EDC can contribute funds to sidewalk. Ms. Seely wanted to wait on that discussion until the report is complete.

Ms. Seely made a motion to approve \$6,750 and extend the contract for two months. Mr. DiNatale seconded. All approved.

Further discussion about changing the EDC contract to add a statement about working with small towns and volunteers where it's easy to have misunderstandings. And clarifying the chain of command as well as a clearer understanding of changes to the contract.

Ms. Davies wanted to make sure that any project that might tear up Route 4, i.e. where there are granite curbs, be done before the 2020 paving.

She was asking a principal question? Will the EDC support this type of project?

Some discussion about prioritizing sidewalks or raising taxes, but concluded that the EDC funds are for planning and implementation vs. infrastructure. They are not to be used replace another source of funding.

d. **Recreation Assets**

Mr. Kimbell was scheduled to meet with Billings Farm on Friday to discuss use of the Woodstock Resort property. The Recreation Committee is moving forward on walking path to the east from the East End Park. It's about a 3.8 mile trail.

The Committee is also applying for Land and Water Conservation Fund and VOREC grants.

Executive Session:

Mr. Kimbell gave some background on the request. The EDC paid for a 1 year to a PR firm who published content in different places with inconclusive results. The EDC then entered into an agreement with Chamber. The EDC financed the re-building of website using the Chamber's URL. Included in the agreement was a social media content creator.

The idea was to create a committee to make it work and use the website as a source of funding. Unfortunately, there were bumps on road on the clarity of the structure.

The current contract ends December 31, so it is time to negotiate a new contract. Mr. Kimbell motioned to go into Executive Session. Mr. DiNatale seconded. All in favor.

Following a move to come out of Executive Session, Mr. Kimbell motioned to extend a new contract to Katie Berdan for \$25,000 for content development for 12 months. Ms. Cooke seconded the motion. All approved.

Mr. Kimbell motioned to extend the Chamber MOU for three months. Mr. Spector seconded. All approved.

Mr. Kimbell motioned to accept the Origin contract for maintenance expenses for \$4,000 for six months. Mr. DiNatale seconded. All approved.

Mr. Spector and Mr. DiNatale will work with the Chamber on the MOU.

Ms. Cooke will remain on the website committee.

VIII. Other Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Adjournment

On a motion from Mr. Spector, seconded by Ms. Seely, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Miller
EDC Coordinator
December 10, 2018