

Woodstock Economic Development Commission

Draft Minutes

January 3, 2019

Commissioners present: Charlie Kimbell, Julia Cooke, Joe DiNatale, Jon Spector, Mica Seely, Courtney Lowe, Barry Milstone, Michael Malik (phone)

Commissioners absent: one vacancy

Others Present: Sally Miller, Macy Lawrence, Ray Bourgeois, Christian Avard, Jill Davies (p.t.), Beth Finlayson

I. Call to Order

Mr. Kimbell called the meeting to order at 7:03.

II. Citizen Comments

None.

III. Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Spector, the minutes of December 6 were approved. All approved by voice.

IV. Grant Discussions

Community Visioning

Ms. Miller presented. The visioning group received five proposals for the facilitation. The committee reviewed all the applications and ranked them with a rubric. They recommend Community Workshop / Rebecca Sanborn Stone. She has worked with Bethel and a number of other Vermont communities. The committee ranked her proposal high because she works with communities to tailor the process to fit their community.

A motion was made by Mr. Milstone to approve \$25,000 for Community Workshop. Ms. Cooke seconded.

In discussion Mr. Spector wanted to make clear that 1.) Specific outcome is important – by early fall need to understand town sense of priorities of capital spending - tangible and clear. 2.) That the EDC has a process so that they know who is the client.

Mr. Milstone said that we are not starting from scratch; there are still groups working from the past. He felt the need for an inventory of what is going on now and being able to leverage what is happening.

Ms. Davies expressed concern that there is a plan in place for making sure that the project is done on time and on budget. Ms. Miller will oversee the project.

Mr. Bourgeois wanted to know why we need the visioning; he is concerned about the outreach. There was more discussion about process and opportunities.

Voted by voice. All voted to approve \$25,000 for Community Workshop for community visioning.

V. Financial Report

Reported as part of Item 8.

VI. Coordinator Report

Some questions about whether the housing report would be available to public. It is still a draft, so should not be posted yet. Further discussion about next steps. It was decided that it might be best to have it presented as part of a public meeting - maybe tacked onto a Select Board or Planning Commission regular meeting.

Municipal boards and the public would be invited to attend.

The audience also asked where the financial report can be found. Ms. Miller will look into posting it with agenda.

VII. General EDC updates

a. Promotion / Website

The EDC chairs have been working on the new contract with the Digital Media Manager. It's almost ready to go. They are working with the Chamber for extending the MOU. The Chamber wants to get it done by the end of January. The Chamber and EDC have similar visions for serving our community. They are not discussing additional money for marketing right now but need to figure out how to reallocate the buckets of website expenses.

Further discussion about advertising revenue and future potential income, and the need for a calendar that works. Website is working well and a lot of people are engaging with the site.

b. Economic Resources

The committee discussed the Housing Study and how to get input.

They have been talking about the process of grant making, perhaps changing to a rolling deadline or fewer grant cycles. Right now there is a bottleneck so other projects don't happen. They are also talking about when to have applicants appear before the board.

The Committee will continue grant writing sessions. The next workshop is January 17.

Mr. Lowe wanted to know how we get better applicants and reach more people and projects. Who are the people/organizations that could be partners?

c. Civic Revitalization

Mr. DiNatale wanted to state that a number of people worked hard to make sure that the revitalization project happened; the EDC should expect a plan from D&K by the end of February.

The plan is to get it out to municipal boards for their input and then prioritizing and getting the money for some projects.

Mr. Kimbell wanted to know if D&K would be doing a final public meeting that was specified in the original contract. He suggested that the might be done with the Select Board at a warned public meeting in March.

d. Recreation Assets

Mr. Kimbell reported that Recreation committee has met. They have preliminary approval from a couple of the Loop Trail landowners. Sunset Farm will bring access issues to their board in February. The committee still needs to have conversations with Town and Village about use of municipal land.

The committee met with Randy Richardson from Upper Vally Trails Alliance; he has shared resources and offered assistance.

VIII. Other Business

a. How to Tell the EDC Story

Mr. Spector feels that the EDC needs to tell the story so that people know what is happening. He presented a powerpoint about Progress and Priorities. It is a draft piece about what the EDC is doing. He is aware that some numbers and categories will need to be adjusted. He thinks that the EDC should take credit for economic growth; not sure how much. He realizes that other partners like the Chamber and other resources should be recognized.

The EDC needs to make sure that reports are received from grantees so they can be included; there should be a process in place.

Mr. Spector suggested that telling the story might be part of an internal EDC process and the greater community visioning process. How to get it out was discussed – maybe put something together for Town Meeting or do a different public meeting. Mr. Spector suggested getting together a group to discuss how to get it out. Mr. DiNatale and Ms. Miller will help.

IX. New Business

Some discussion about rumors of the closing of a local business that feeds a certain demographic. What is the EDC role in finding an alternative, especially as it is a desirable location?

It was reported that the Select Board is considering a new regulation that board members must attend at least 80% of meetings.

Mr. Avard asked about the State \$10,000 grants and whether the EDC doing anything? Mr. Kimbell mentioned that program is live. The EDC had talked about a complementary program, and the Resources committee will re-consider the local "sweetener". Mr. Lowe reported that it has been posted to woodstockvt.com. Mr. Avard wanted to know if the Legislature would pay \$10,000 for people to stay in the state.

Mr. Kimbell reported that the building for Optomist Center was sold, but they have worked out details with new owner and will continue in the same place.

X. Adjournment

On a motion from Mr. Lowe, seconded by Ms. Seely, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Miller
EDC Coordinator
January 8, 2019