

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON  
HELD ON JULY 6, 2020 VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present: Gregg Carroll, Rita Carver, Cynthia Creech, Anna Duhon, Shawna Fitzsimmons, Marc Frey, Deb Gordon (Board Liaison), Tistrya Houghtling, Ellen Ann Kafkalas, Mitch Kelleher, Jack Lancto, Peg Munves, Sharon Powers, Erminia Rasmussen, Carole Roseman, Monte Wasch (Chair), Josh Young

Absent: Richard Beckwith, Al Bellenchia, Rochelle Dire, Peter Flierl, Chuck Geraldi, Nina Keller, Hollis Reh, Sal Shariff

Members of the public: Steve Powers (CAC, CSC), Rachel Weisman (Columbia Paper), one additional member of the public.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm by Monte Wasch

**DISCUSSION ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S STRUCTURE, LED BY MONTE WASCH**

1. This is the committee structure that Monte wants to present to the Town Board for approval - but wanted discussion and concurrence on the wording of the document before it was presented
2. A lengthy conversation about the wording of the document regarding Mission Statement (clarified as goals) and Scope of Work (clarified tasks toward attaining the goals of the Mission Statement)
3. Shawna F. showed the group the ASANA application as a tool for the committee to use to communicate on one platform and coordinate what we are doing. She, Monte, and Mark Frey will work on presenting an outline to show how it works for this committee and see if it would be useable. Some objections voiced by other members of the committee that this may not work for us because not everyone is as tech savvy or tech-reliant.
4. MSC: A motion was made by Tistrya to use ASANA as a platform to keep track of the committee's projects and seconded by Rita Carver. The motion passed by show of hands. No abstentions, no oppositions.
5. Subcommittees - Tistrya spoke with other committees about how they are used - most are project-oriented working groups that don't make decisions, but instead advise the committees. All decisions must be approved by vote. The subcommittees for the Economic Development committee were formed based on the most immediate needs and importance. Monte said they were formed "organically."
6. Subcommittees will NOT be subject to open-meeting laws but any subcommittee needs the approval of the full committee before they can proceed with any meaningful action. All proposals must come before them. Town Board has the ultimate decision-making power over the full committee.
7. MSC: A motion was made by Erminia to accept the Proposed Structure Document that Monte presented to the Board for approval (as is). Rita Carver seconded. Motion passed by show of hands, no abstentions, no oppositions.

**REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES**

**Hess Station (reported by Tistrya H.)**

Tistrya called the owner of the Hess Station and left two messages, but has not been able to connect. The committee brainstormed about what to do with the property if they can get it. Nina K's husband, a

real estate attorney, offered to work pro bono to serve as lawyer for the transaction in cooperation with the Town's attorney.

### **Food Issues (reported by Cynthia C.)**

Josh Young is now secretary of this group but no official chair has been named. Monte asked that this committee vote on a chair asap and that the subcommittee consider having two working project groups: one for long-range Food issues (such as a grocery store) and one for immediate food projects (such as preserving the Farmer's Market, restarting Meals on Wheels, and other schemes to assure that everyone in New Lebanon has adequate food resources). Carole mentioned that New Lebanon is not eligible for a grant now available for food issues because New Lebanon's aggregate income is too high. She said that New Lebanon, Stephentown and Austerlitz don't qualify. The group did not have time to talk about the Farmer's Market because their last meeting was dominated by the food issues and whether or not to split into two groups. The hope is that with the splitting, more can get done.

### **Infrastructure (reported by Deb Gordon)**

Al and Deb have reached out to the Mayor in Kinderhook and the Superintendent in Hillsdale about their experiences with putting in the sewer system in their respective towns. They are hoping to convince those two to participate in a future meeting so members can "pick their brains" to find out information that might be helpful to New Lebanon. Apparently there is a lot of money available for grants now towards infrastructure. Hillsdale is also in the process of expanding their program because it was so successful.

The committee was originally charged with looking into water & sewer, internet, and electricity. Internet is an ongoing problem and the state is already having issues fighting with Spectrum over it. Therefore, it doesn't seem feasible to have a committee work on this, other than to map the town to see who is getting what. Monte wants to keep this part of the committee's charge alive in case the future allows for more potential to be effective in this regard. Same with electricity - NYSEG says that there were only 14 outages October through June and only one had to do with a NYSEG-preventable outage. Outages are caused mostly by trees on private land falling on lines.

### **Beautification and Design (reported by Rita Carver)**

Secretary is Ellen Ann Kafilakas. Rita talked about the proposal for a contest and prize for revising the "Miracle Mile." Members have been tasked with getting goals before the next meeting. Asked the members for a list of short-terms goals but none have been received yet.

### **Historical Focus (reported by Rita Carver, the only member of the committee)**

No action yet

### **Communications (reported by Tistrya Houghtling)**

No official chair of this subcommittee yet, but Tistrya took notes at the last committee meeting, which was very productive. Discussions included the creation of welcome packets, promoting tourism to neighboring communities, branding, consistency, website redesign (town's website). Sharon & Shawna will work on helping to give the town website a facelift, keeping in mind the rural character of the town.

### **FUTURE:**

Jack Lancto reported that there is possible interest from a drug store to come to New Lebanon. He has joined and will coordinate with the food access group.

The meeting was adjourned by Monte Wasch at 8:03 pm

Next meeting: Monday, August 3, 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers