

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON AUGUST 4, 2020 VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present: Gregg Carroll, Rita Carver, Cynthia Creech, Anna Duhon, Deb Gordon (Board Liaison), Tistrya Houghtling, Ellen Ann Kafkalas, Mitch Kelleher, Sharon Powers, Erminia Rasmussen, Monte Wasch (Chair), Josh Young

Absent: Al Bellenchia, Richard Beckwith, Shawna Fitzsimmons, Peter Flierl, Marc Frey, Chuck Geraldi, Nina Keller, Jack Lancto, Peg Munves

Members of the public: John Trainor (Town Board member) plus One.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Monte Wasch

MSC: To approve the minutes of the July 6 meeting made by Monte and seconded by Tistrya Houghtling. Motion approved.

REPORTS FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEES

Communications (reported by Tistrya)

The subcommittee now has an official chair, Tistrya, and minutes taker, Sharon Powers. It also wanted approval from the group to change its name to the Outreach and Marketing subcommittee

MSC: To change the name of the Communications subcommittee to the Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee (OM) was made by Tistrya and seconded by Ellen Ann Kafkalas. Motion approved

The OM is now working on a mission and vision statement and will present this to the committee when it is more solidified. As part of this, it has decided that it did not want to include zoning and local enforcement in its mission and rather recommended a different Town or BEDC committee be formed to address this. It suggested waiting until after planned round table discussions of business leaders before making any specific decisions/recommendations about the group that would address this.

Branding - the OM wants to work on branding for the town and want to move forward on this important project. Wanted the BEDC to approve this and then wants Monte to get the approval from the Board to work on a coherent and consistent branding. Will work with the Beautification Subcommittee (which also has a requested name change, see below) to guide their work as well.

MSC: That the BEDC approve the OM to work on a consistent branding for the town of New Lebanon

and for the chair of the BEDC to request Town approval to do so was made by Tistrya and seconded by Ellen Ann. Motion approved.

Beautification and Design (reported by Rita Carver)

The subcommittee requests a name change to better reflect their mission and vision.

MSC: To change the name of Beautification Subcommittee to the Community Appearance and Design Subcommittee (CAD) was made by Rita and seconded by Ellen Ann. Motion approved.

The CAD is now working on a mission statement and trying to merge older documents that addressed this with the current vision. They will assign this task to one of its members.

Future ideas:

Design Competition - The CAD will work with the Chatham architect, Zachary Pearson, on the competition. Zachary Pearson will donate his services. Competition is an idea competition for the Miracle Mile - and perhaps throughout New Lebanon - details not yet firmed up.

MSC: To be able to research this and work with Zachary Pearson to help frame the Design Competition was made by Rita and seconded by Tistrya. Motion approved.

Art and Business Project - similar to what Pittsfield did with sheep, the CAD wants to have some type of object (i.e. a Shaker rocking chair, reptile, cow, etc.) to link business sponsors and artists and result in an art installation for the town (in summer). Could include a map of where all the objects exist - fun activity for tourists and kids. Details not yet worked out, including price of object, what object should be. Anna Duhon suggested coordinating this with Sara Steadman and the artists residency program. Sharon suggested working with the OM for branding to assist with the choice of object to be decorated.

MSC: to research this project and move forward with it was made by Rita and seconded by Tistrya. Mo-

tion approved.

Historical Focus (reported by Rita Carver)

Wants to work on a short-term project called Hometown Heroes - where the town displays banners that highlight local veterans from New Lebanon. Tistrya and Louise Waters had started working with the American Legion to get names and Rita will reach out to the Historical Society as well. Tistrya pointed out that Jack Lancto might want to work with her and Tistrya will introduce Rita to the people at the Historical society. The organization, Hometown Heroes, will be of assistance as well.

MSC: to take on this project that Tistrya started was made by Rita and seconded by Erminia Rasmus-

sen. Motion approved.

Food Issues (reported by Cynthia C.)

Cynthia Creech is now the chair of this group with Josh Young as Secretary/Minutes taker.

The group wanted the following statement of goals and objectives entered into the record:

GOAL:

Increase the economic gains for all NL businesses and residents involved in food production, food service and food consumption. Benefit to the farmers/producers by selling more products, to the restaurants and cafes by selling more food and to the residents by access to convenient, more nutritious food helping them be healthier, more productive citizens.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Encourage/assist a grocery store in coming to town - research and networking. Suggest ways the Town can encourage and assist a grocer.
- 2) Encourage restaurants and cafes to use of locally produced foods. Assist with advertising such use in order to capitalize on the local food movement. Use liaison to other subcommittees.

- 3) Establish more frequent and more robust Farmers' Market, with added option for virtual market.
- 4) Support the Farmers' Market in forming a proposal for Town sponsorship.
- 5) Increase and improve existing food delivery services and supplement the foods with local products. Research establishing a new delivery service focused on local foods.
- 6) Support monthly community meals especially including even more local products.
- 7) Supplement the existing food provision program sponsored by the School District and the Regional Food Bank with local products. Given uncertainty around public health, prepare to support the program in other ways, including potentially becoming a core organizer.
- 8) Establish liaison between this subcommittee and the Outreach/Marketing subcommittee.
- 9) Negotiate with any potential grocery store to offer local products.

FOOD: whether you grow it, sell it, cook it or eat it, the above actions will increase the potential for economic growth for businesses and improved life and health for citizens in New Lebanon.

Asked for the BEDC to approve all of these goals and objectives. Tistrya wanted it divided out and only definite actions (not just actions that need to be researched first) be presented to the Board.

Motion: to have the Town Board approve and support three of the objectives: the Farmer's Market, supplementing school programs with local foods, and establishing a vision between this subcommittee and the OM was made by Cynthia.

Discussion - Erminia wanted to present all 9 of the objectives to the board (not just those three Cynthia proposed) and wants to jump on an opportunity if it arises and not wait for Board approval - she advocated presenting the whole list and not breaking it up.

Monte thinks we can endorse all of the objectives but doesn't want to present them to the Board until projects are more formed. He doesn't believe subcommittee research on a specific project would be held up if we didn't have Board approval.

MSC: To approve the Food Subcommittee's strategies as a working plan but recommended consulting with Tistrya regarding what should be presented before the Board and when it would be ready to do so

was made by Monte and seconded by Rita. Motion approved.

Infrastructure (reported by Deb Gordon)

Deb Gordon and AI have had conversations with the town supervisor in Kinderhook and Hillsdale - will put together a plan going forward of how to do this here. Need to be approached from a technical point of view. There is some grant money to get an engineering person to do a feasibility study of what a sewer system would cost and there needs to be a proposal to build public support if it is feasible. Hillsdale had a similar problem there - they had a program to define a sewer district and sell it to the town. Need to see what financial advantages to the town from it. She and AI will sketch out a plan to move forward.

Monte said there are Federal and State grant sources available. He mentioned that the Hillsdale supervisor who just resigned said that having the sewer system did more to accelerate business in Hillsdale than any single thing he accomplished.

Cynthia recommended reading the May/June issue on Economic Development from the Association of Towns called "Talk of the Town" - which had two great articles in it. Issues available at Town Hall and

she recommended that both Monte and Steve Powers (of Climate Smart Taskforce) be put on the mail-

ing list for this.

Hess Station (reported by Tistrya)

Tistrya finally got in contact with the owners of the Hess station - found out that it is assessed at \$245,000. They want something in writing from the town and this was done. The town of NL wants it to be donated and noted that this would save Hess money (taxes and maintenance) if they did so.

Monte didn't think this should be under BEDC but Tistrya pointed out that if it was used as a tourist/in-

formation centre, then it would be a BEDC program and Monte agreed.

OTHER TOPICS

Broadband - Tistrya pointed out that Consolidated and Spectrum were under two different state agreements. Consolidated has covered everything they committed to doing (and more) in exchange for what they received from the state. Spectrum did not get any money from the state, but were allowed to have their merger go through. They had agreed to update their existing infrastructure and they have begun to do this and the hope is that they will be rolling out more coverage soon, especially in areas of New Lebanon that have spotty or no coverage at all.

With Covid and the need for more at-home learning, the Federal government may get more involved in getting broadband to areas that presently do not have it. There may be more funding available as well.

Next Town Board Meeting, August 11, 2020

BEDC Mission Statement - The Town Board will be adopting a resolution to approve a mission statement of the BEDC.

Please send approved (by the meeting tonight) proposals to Monte before the Town Board meeting so he can present them to the Board.

Next meeting of the BEDC: Monday, September 14, 6:30 pm (because the previous Monday is Labor Day) and will be held at the Shatford Pavilion and online. If you bring a laptop to this meeting and sign onto the online meeting as well, members who won't be physically present can see everyone.

The meeting was adjourned by Monte Wasch at 7:36 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers