

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON NOVEMBER 2, 2020 AT NEW LEBANON TOWN HALL AND VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present: Richard Beckwith, Gregg Carroll, Cynthia Creech, Deb Gordon (Board Liaison), Tistrya Houghtling, Ellen Ann Kafkalas, Jack Lancto, Sharon Powers, Erminia Rasmussen, Monte Wasch (Chair), Josh Young

Absent: Al Bellenchia, Rita Carver, Anna Duhon,, Chuck Geraldi, Mitch Kelleher, Nina Keller, Peg Munves

Members of the public: One

CALL TO ORDER:

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

GENERAL TOPICS

Monte said he sent out an email blast using the email list from the Small Business Development Corporation.

He also said that in New Lebanon, a few longstanding businesses were closing but two new businesses were coming to town: a new jewelry store in the Midtown Mall (where NAPA was) and a new craft store in the Valley Mall, that is owned by the mall owner. He said that the new Roaring 20's Brewery, open on weekends, seemed to be doing very well.

He also said it will most likely be a tough winter for businesses in town and he urged everyone to buy local when possible, including take-out from the local restaurants.

REPORTS FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEES

Outreach and Marketing

Tistrya reported on the recent BEDC business directory that was sent with the November Town newsletter. She thanked the people who had worked on it: Sharon Powers (Graphic Design & Layout), Erminia Rasmussen, Cynthia Creech, Anna Duhon & Tistrya. All listings were verified by the team and the directory received lots of compliments and gratitude. More businesses have contacted Tistrya to be included in the next directory. Erminia said if anyone knows of a business that was left off to let Tistrya and her know - the document is a live, ongoing process.

Town Board budgeted for two mailings next year -which may be an updated business directory or something else.

Committee will begin to focus on more outreach and marketing now that the directory is complete and will continue with the branding discussion it has already started, marketing the town as a lifestyle to

encourage more families to move here.

Infrastructure

Nothing to report. Monte asked if meetings were set up with other towns to see how they did their infrastructure. A letter was not yet sent out to Hillsdale & Kinderhook. Deb asked Steve Muse to help with sewer plans since he did this in the last town he was living in.

The outcome of this election might affect available grant money. Some suggested the USDA had available money for small towns but Erminia said we might not be eligible to apply for it because our town was too rich by their standards. Monte said that there are some USDA grants that are not income dependent. We need to find out what is feasible first.

Community Art & Design

Nothing to report

Hess Station

Nothing to report

Food Issues

They are continuing to participate in food distribution. This has helped to provide economic stability for residents. 20,000 pounds of food has been delivered every other week. They have a great group of

volunteers helping with the distribution.

Finances

Some modifications were made to the Town Budget - \$3000 for the BEDC for mailings, logo design and the competition. There will be public hearing on the budget Thursday but everyone seemed to support the BEDC's request for the \$3000.

Sales tax revenues for the third quarter were \$144,000, which is higher than 2019 and 2018 - this might be heading for a dip from the colder weather and people eating inside now. Columbia County revenues were higher than other counties around, which is a credit to Mike Tucker and Jeff Hunt of the CEDC that encouraged people to shop local with their Columbia Comeback Committee. Construction was significantly up in the third quarter. Service industries are up - about 50 houses were sold in New Lebanon from February to now.

Future

Monte wants the next meeting to be a brainstorming session again so we can assess what we are currently doing and add or subtract as necessary from goals and objectives. Tistrya suggested that Monte send out the list of short and long term goals again so people can come better prepared to the meeting.

Next meeting of the BEDC: Monday, December 7, 6:30 pm with venue to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned by Monte Wasch at 7:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers

