

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON FEBRUARY 1 2021 VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present: Rita Carver, Anna Duhon, Deb Gordon (Board Liaison), Tistrya Houghtling, Ellen Ann Kafkalas, Jack Lancto, Peg Munves, Sharon Powers, Monte Wasch (Chair), Josh Young

Guest: Ted Salem, Comp Plan Review Committee

Absent: Al Bellenchia, Richard Beckwith, Gregg Carroll, Chuck Geraldi, Mitch Kelleher, Nina Keller, Erminia Rasmussen,

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Monte Wasch

MSC: To approve the minutes from the last meeting was made by Ellen Ann Kafkalas, seconded by Tistrya, motion approved

Monte asked if any subcommittees had anything to report since the last meeting.

CAD Committee presented by Rita Carver:

The committee is moving on some ideas, going forward with the architecture competition - will meet later on proposal to architects and will send that to Zach Pierson of Ghent and get his reactions to it. Hope to distribute it by this summer.

A Rural Communities Grant might be appropriate to assist with this - the deadline is sometime in mid-March (earliest) and most likely later than that. The committee hopes to hold its meetings at 5pm on the same evening the BEDC meets from now on.

Food Committee presented by Josh Young

The virtual market is working on a report for the Berkshire Agricultural Adventures - for the grant for \$15,000 they received from them. They used the funds to supplement SNAP and related benefits. The money was a booster for the demand side of the marketplace, a way to promise producers that they wouldn't be wasting their time. Now working on a group of people for the subcommittee - not formal yet. Monte said he can and is encouraged to ask others to join as well. Tistrya asked how the town and Farmers Market can work more together - Josh indicated that he has not worked on this yet - didn't see it as a priority but still interested. Tistrya suggested there are things the town could help with such as emails from the Town clerk, offsite insurance - suggested that someone needs to see what others towns do with their farmers' markets. New Lebanon can't use taxpayer money to promote a private entity

Monte wanted to know if there are other towns with a relationship and Josh didn't think this type of research was necessary. Monte responded that there must be a town with a document to look at and perhaps we could get a Town board motion to see if a town can promote its farmer's market and then go from there

Priorities for the BEDC

Monte shared his presentation on this - he had come up with a set of priorities for 2021 - he rewrote the presentation of priorities based on this discussion and they are as follows:

Food Issues

— Continue to expand reach and volume of the Virtual Farmers Market

— Relaunch Community Meals program of food distribution in the Spring, and support the BiRegional Food Bank and Rolling Grocers programs

Outreach & Marketing

- Launch new Town logo
- Develop “Welcome” packages for new residents and businesses
- Develop “Buy Local” initiatives and marketing materials
- Improve communication with existing businesses and get their buy-in for BEDC priorities

Community Appearance & Design

- Continue development of a design competition for the appearance of the Town central business district
- Explore location and siting of a proposed second business district for future development
- Launch Veterans ’banner project. (This is also a priority for the **History** sub-committee)

Town Codes & Business Simplification

— Work with the Town Code Enforcement Officer, the various Boards, and the Zoning Rewrite Committee to produce materials that help businesses navigate the establishment, permitting, zoning and other legal requirements

Infrastructure

— Take immediate steps to make New Lebanon more attractive to new businesses, especially to encourage home-based businesses: Internet improvements are crucial, working with the Town Broadband Committee.

— Explore water/sewer improvements possibly for Town center, but also look at potential other locations to the West of Town center.

A number of items mentioned in last year’s priority targets were placed on hold, including an Arts project and acquisition of the Hess station as a Visitors/Welcome Center. It was agreed that development of a Community Center was outside the purview of BEDC.

Other Projects:

Tistrya reported, when asked, that a Community Center for New Lebanon is now on hold until Covid-19 dies down. There may be a location for it but nothing has been solidified and we won’t know anything for three months. This project, however, is not now part of the BEDC.

MSC: To approve the revised statement of priorities was made by Tistrya and seconded by Rita. Motion approved.

Next meeting of the BEDC: Monday, March 1, at 6:30pm.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Tistrya, seconded by Deb Gordon. Meeting adjourned at 7:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers