

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

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

Absent: Al Bellenchia, Richard Beckwith, Chuck Geraldi, Mitch Kelleher, Nina Keller

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm by Monte Wasch who began by asking for the subcommittee reports.

Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee, presented by Tistrya Houghtling

Tistrya reported that the subcommittee received approval from the Town Board for the proposed mailer and Town logo redesign. A mass email was sent out to businesses asking for information for the mailer and only one response was received. The note was resent today and five people have responded so far. Some businesses don't have anything to contribute. The hard deadline for all submissions is March 12. Erminia will be collating all the information received. Sharon Powers will be doing the design and production; businesses will have the ability to proof their coupons. The mailer will be distributed along with the May 1 Town newsletter.

Community Appearance and Design Subcommittee, presented by Rita Carver:

The committee has filled out an application to the Citizens Institute for Rural Design (which will be submitted pending Town Board approval) and is struggling with the budget to be included for the \$6,000 grant that comes with it. They still need a location to hold the two-day event. The \$6000 grant, which must be matched locally, is for a learning cohort program which will give New Lebanon (NL) access to specialists in civic design. This will help NL with the goal of redesigning the Miracle Mile and possibly bring in tourism. They are workshops. How it works is that we give them our design problem, they study the problem and draft a proposed solution - we can move ahead with it if we choose or not.

Questions asked from the other members of the BEDC: (answered by both Rita Carver and Deb Gordon)

Who would attend the workshops?

Answer: They (the Citizens Institute for Rural Design) bring in half a dozen people and the BEDC and CAD would solicit interest in the local community and see who wants to attend.

Was this similar to the Behan Plan which didn't go anywhere?

Answer: That was more strategic, this has more of a design focus

Where does that \$6000 get spent?

Answer: For the two-day workshop, renting the room, catering, signage, equipment, for the entire day for two days

How does the subcommittee need help?

Answer: Need someone good with budgets and someone who can administer the grant. Need volunteers to phone businesses in area and see if they want to participate. (Erminia volunteered to help with the budgeting.)

When does the workshop happen?

Answer: Will announce this by middle of May and take place in August or September. They have 18 months from the time they are accepted to complete all the workshops.

Question: What happens at the end of the \$6000 grant workshop? What do you get?

Answer: You get a "Look Book" - plan is visually presented that will help the town identify relevant grants to make the plan into a reality. The idea is to present businesses with something compelling and help them finance so they can achieve it. This is a conceptual first step.

Question: What does the 50% match entail?

Answer: It can be volunteer hours, materials, space

Question: When is the deadline to apply?

Answer: March 12

MSC: To approve submitting this proposal to the TB to ask for permission to apply for this grant was made by Monte and seconded by Erminia. Motion approved.

MSC: To approve the minutes of the February 1, 2021, BEDC meeting was made by Tistrya and seconded by Rita. Motion approved.

Food Committee presented by Josh Young
No news to report.

Tistrya wanted to know the role the Town can play in the Farmers Market. The town can't gift resources to the Farmers Market, but if the Farmers Market had a proper public purpose, they could get resources from the Town. The town lawyer sent Tistrya a response to her question regarding this collaboration which she will distribute to the BEDC members. The Farmers Market is an LLC and this designation brings limitations regarding what the Town can and cannot do.

Town Codes & Business Simplification

Gregg sent Monte the booklet created by Trina Porte and he converted it into a MS Word document. He said the flowchart is excellent and explains if you need a zoning board or planning board meeting to get a task accomplished. Will work with Cissy on updating this. Other "how-to" guidebooks should be considered - like for the planning board - one for the members and one for the public, also the building and zoning department. The goal should be consistency. Topics to include: how to get approval, how to relocate, expand or remodel - should be for any businesses of any nature. Gregg asked if she should edit what is there now and was asked to edit it and then send it to Tistrya and Cissy.

Erminia made the point that we all have great ideas towards a common goal, but we are not getting the input from the businesses. We should meet with 6-7 businesses willing to talk and find out what they need as help. Tistrya said that it's very difficult to get this input and that she has reached out to businesses several times. Tistrya did indicate that the businesses have liked the communications coming via email from the BEDC and that we are performing a service even if this is not outwardly appreciated. Peg said that many businesses are barely treading on water as it is and may not have the extra time to communicate with the BEDC. We might have to wait to get the businesses more involved until we can do in person meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 7:19pm.

Next meeting of the BEDC: Monday, April 5, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers