

NOTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON September 8, 2021 AT NL TOWN HALL

Present: Rita Carver, Deb Gordon (Board Liaison), Tistrya Houghtling, Ellen Ann Kafalakis, Danielle Kuffel, Jack Lancto, Erminia Rasmussen, Sharon Powers, Monte Wasch (Chair), Josh Young

Absent: Richard Beckwith, Gregg Carroll, Anna Duhon, Chuck Gerald, Tistrya Houghtling, Mitch Kelleher, Peg Munves

CALL TO ORDER:

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

DISCUSSION

Monte said that tonight we had two things to discuss: report from the Committees and then what we want to include in our proposed budget for next year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee, presented by Erminia Rasmussen

The slogans are now out for the next round of voting. So far we have received 53 votes and people have until October 5 to get their votes in. The subcommittee is working on the updated Business Directory which will go out with the November Town newsletter. People have until September 10 to get in their changes or additions. There are 14 new businesses that will be included in the directory (that weren't in the last directory or are new to town) and a few that have to be deleted because they are no longer in business. For the next project, the subcommittee is contemplating working on a welcome packet for new businesses and new people to town.

Food Committee, presented by Josh Young

Josh gave a brief history of the Farmers Market, which has been taking place (outdoors) for about 10 years. Last year he started the online market and then recently opened the indoor Farmers Market, which is presently housed in the Fisher Store. Everything that is sold there is by local farmers and food producers. The indoor market has been an added service to the farmers. For the consumers there are some benefits of a traditional store, but the offerings, for now, are small. Some farmers who are part of the outdoor market do not participate and some only participate in the indoor market. This is the 5th week operating and the revenue is going up each week. Many residents have been taking advantage of it and it will be open throughout the winter.

Historical Focus/Community Appearance, presented by Rita Carver

The Hometown Heroes project now has put up about a dozen flags on Route 20. The poles on 22 are too big for the holders. The system has worked well with their liaison, Chris Lechey. Flags will have to come down for the winter. Thanks to Country Squire for helping to put them up. They could use more publicity to get more people to participate in the program.

For the BEDC Budget Next Year

Monte asked for proposals from those committee members in attendance as to what the BEDC should tackle and how much money it may need to do so. The following proposals were made and will be included in Monte's request to the Board:

1. The production of a destination map that may be out at kiosks in the region. The LVBA put one out a while ago and he thinks we should do something in that style. It might require private funds to complete, including distribution. He estimated about \$7,000 for this. Someone will ask Max Gitter who produced the last one if we could use his template and just update it.
2. Continue to print two business directories a year and update it – suggested to go out with the February and August editions of the Town Newsletter. Not sure of the present cost but most likely should just repeat what was budgeted for this year's two publications.
3. A welcome packet for new businesses and residents – estimated to cost \$1000.
4. To work on the formation of an LDC (Local Development Corporation) – an independent entity with a board of directors, not charitable, which can accept government grants from foundations for special business purposes, i.e. buying land, building a building, making loans. At this point, the BEDC would need money for legal assistance to draft the charter, file any appropriate fees, etc. Estimate about \$2000 for this and hope to have this ready by 2023. At that point, the LDC would need professional staff, such as an executive director (eventually). Most staffing would depend upon the funding projects chosen, but it would most likely not be a permanent staff.

The BEDC budget was \$6000 for this year.

Meeting adjourned 7:20

Next meeting: Will be on October 4, most likely with a ZOOM option.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers