

NOTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON October 5, 2021 AT NL TOWN HALL AND VIA TELECONFERENCE

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

Absent: Richard Beckwith, Chuck Geraldi, Mitch Kelleher, Jack Lancto

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm by Monte Wasch who asked for the subcommittee reports

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee, presented by Erminia Rasmussen

Tomorrow is the last day for residents to choose one of the 6 slogans in the survey. So far, 189 people have responded by email, Google Forms, Music in the Park, the Community Tag Sale, and especially Town Clean-up Day. A special thank you to Kaitlin Houghtling who was able to get 95 people to choose their favorite slogans at Town Clean-up Day. The results will be presented to the Town Board at their October 12 meeting and the subcommittee hopes they will choose the most favorable slogan – so far there is a clear winner.

The updated Business Directory now includes some new businesses as well as Community Organizations and Non-profits and has been completed and sent to Marcie for printing with the November Town newsletter (as an insert like last time).

Food Committee, presented by Josh Young

There was a write-up in the *Times Union* as well as *Hudson 360* about the indoor Farmers Market. He now has a core of volunteers and a variety of products. The market is making slow and steady progress. In response to a question from Monte, Josh said that most people are hearing about the market through word-of-mouth.

Infrastructure, presented by Deb Gordon and Monte Wasch

A discussion was had about the recent article in *Talk of the Towns*, about successful water and sewer programs with the NY State Environmental Facilities Corp (EFC). There is a new process to get planning grants and work with the DEC to help communities upgrade their water infrastructure or help solve problems for towns with a population of 10,000 or less. There may be a \$30,000 grant available – they would cover 80% of the cost of a feasibility study and will permit in-kind contributions to make up part of the Town's 20% contribution.

Deb Gordon said their website mentioned a community assistance program to help communities navigate the bureaucracy.

Tistrya Houghtling asked if anyone had spoken with the local property owners to find out if this is something they would want.

Deb mentioned that in Voorheesville they are expanding their system into their commercial center. Average for a sewer district participant per year, including the maintenance system, is \$700/year. But it is hard to use their system as an example because it started out as a residential system privately built and is now expanding.

The EFC is looking into Green Technologies – should we have the CAC or CSC participate in this? The EFC has awarded more than \$700 million with 0% interest to communities.

Erminia Rasmussen asked if we can do this and what would be our next step.

Answer: apply for a planning grant for a feasibility study to see if we're eligible

Tistrya said that it's not that difficult to get a ballpark amount and numbers without spending money from an engineering company – give them some parameters, i.e. 27 parcels in a 1 ½ mile distance and get a ballpark on costs.

Still thinks we should ask the property owners if they'd be interested and if they said no, this is a non-starter.

Someone asked if we could use emails to find out this information?

Josh Young said a letter in the mail would not be a good idea – but he volunteered to do door-to-door outreach. (Problem is that some owners do not live in New Lebanon.)

Deb Gordon (and Rita Carver agreed) that most owners will say “no” when asked, especially if they did not have a rough idea of what it would cost.

Anna Duhon said that we really need to build up the groundwork with the property owners – need conversations – sharing some clarity around the process and that they would have aa say

Monte suggested we proceed on two tracks:

1. Personally approach businesses and property owners and get a sense of their reaction – that the Town is thinking about this and would you be interested in knowing the results of a feasibility study
2. See if we qualify for EFC money and how we would go about getting it

Rita said we should look at Chatham and other towns to get figures – Voorheesville would be skewed because it started out as residential and was an already established operation

Need to factor in administrative and maintenance costs

Deb pointed out that there are different types of systems – our high water table might make things different. She had wanted to invite people to come to New Lebanon so we could ask questions but has not had success getting people to agree.

Monte suggested Hillsdale. Chatham is too dense and not a great comparison. He asked Tistrya to talk to the supervisor in Hillsdale and see if we could get the current operating numbers from Hillsdale.

How Shall we Proceed?

Josh will talk to businesses, Deb will talk to our comparable towns

MSC: To try to get someone from Hillsdale to give us expenses and costs and see if we can get the EFC grants was made by Monte, seconded by Danielle Kuffel. Motion approved.

Monte asked Danielle to help explore the grant part of this motion and she agreed. He wants two questions answered: what will this cost us and are we eligible.

Josh should get us a report by the next meeting – someone will send the business list to Josh.

New Business – presented by Tistrya Houghtling

Anna Duhon has stepped down from the O & M subcommittee and now she and Tistrya want to form a new subcommittee on healthcare access in town. This will include some type of healthcare that might happen three days a week, Covid vaccines, and collaborating with other health care agencies. The idea is to bring healthcare access to New Lebanon. When asked why this should be in the BEDC, Tistrya said that until a formal Health and Wellness committee is formed, they'd like to have this as a subcommittee and can then determine if it needs to move to a newly formed Town committee (that will be recommended by the new Comprehensive Plan.)

MSC: Made by Ellen Ann Kafkalas that the new subcommittee on Health Care Access be formed with Tistrya and Anna. Seconded by Rita. Motion approved.

Danielle Kuffel volunteered to join the subcommittee as well.

Monte encouraged BEDC members to attend the Comprehensive Plan Public forum on Wednesday, October 13, at 7pm at Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned 7:26

Next meeting: Will be on November 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers