

Woodstock Economic Development Commission Agenda

Draft Minutes

July 2, 2020

All participants on the Zoom due to COVID-19

Commissioners present: Jon Spector, Larry Niles, Courtney Lowe, Mica Seely, Julia Cooke

Commissioners absent: Joe DiNatale, Michael Malik, Elizabeth Reaves, one vacancy

Others Present: Sally Miller, Mary Riley, Beth Finlayson, Jeffrey Kahn, Allan Stein, Martin Copenhaver, Antonia Richie, Jill Davies, T Belisle, Karim Houry, Bill Kerbin, Patrick Fultz, Isabelle Chicoine, others unidentified on the phone

I. Call to Order

Chair Spector called the meeting to order at 7:02. The agenda was reviewed. The meeting was recorded. Recording is available on the EDC webpage – <https://bit.ly/2VQ8hum>.

II. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

Chair Spector requested the following changes to the agenda:

1. Unfreezing funding for the Teagle Landing improvement project
2. Briefly announce the Vermont Emergency Economic Recovery Grant
3. Comments about how to set the agenda

III. Citizen's Comments

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes

With a motion from Mr. Lowe and seconded by Ms. Cooke the minutes of June 4 were unanimously approved. No roll call taken.

V. Financial Update

Chair Spector reviewed the status of EDC funds. The financial statement is identical to last month. We will continue to forecast based on no revenue. Assuming that the EDC spends all of the grant money and all of the relief fund and there will still be 135K in funds at the end of the year. We are in good financial shape but will not end the year with reserves.

Mr. Houry mentioned that taxes that were deferred are now being asked to be paid, so there may be more funds for the past period.

Mr. Lowe reported that Sen. Welch is hopeful that the next round of funding may have money for municipalities.

VI. Update on Business Relief Fund and Woodstock Works

Ms. Miller presented an update of the Business Relief Fund. A report was posted to the EDC webpage.

Total Applications – 41 Not eligible/ withdrawn – 4

Total Awarded in First Round - \$36,600

Applications for Round Two - 12

Total Awarded in Round Two - \$11,200

Awards that have been repaid – 2 Total Repaid - \$2,000

Balance in the Account - \$54,200

Brief discussion about the new state fund and whether the EDC fund is still needed. Ms. Finlayson said that the state funds are restrictive.

VII. Discussion of COVID-19 Response Initiatives

a. Grant Request from Woodstock Select Board

Ms. Davies and Ms. Riley presented. While they are Select Board members, this is not a Select Board project. They want one uniform look for the town and would like to produce laminated signs. Lev Belford has made it look more professional. They will print small numbers at a time so that they are not wasted. They will also place an ad in the newspaper.

Ms. Cooke wondered if it contradicts what some restaurants/businesses doing? Some are not wearing masks and not social distancing. Which will people comply with?

Mr. Lowe stated that the Woodstock Inn is requiring masks indoors and even outdoors when in close proximity.

Mr. Niles wanted to know if it is possible to put them in other places than just businesses, so that people coming to town know that we are taking it seriously.

Ms. Davies said that it has been posted in stores and public buildings but could put it on a sandwich board.

Ms. Seely loves the sign and the uniformity. She questioned if the sign is not there, what does it mean? Ms. Davies said that it is voluntary.

Ms. Finlayson is happy with the sign, but wishes it was more positive. Brattleboro did a sign with hashtag – “Love Brattleboro.”

Ms. Chicoine (Woodstock Chamber Co-Chair) is uncomfortable in situations where visitors are not wearing masks, so the Chamber is asking the town to make masks mandatory in stores and crowded sidewalks.

Mr. Kahn has one on his bulletin board and wants to have a sign on the door. They remind people to mask and sanitize, if they don't, they will be asked to leave his shop. He thinks it is good for the shop keepers. An ordinance (which he would vote for) would help inform customers and make it easier for shopkeepers.

Mr. Houry worried that if it doesn't get approved it might change (our inflection level.)

Mr. Lowe thought it should keep everyone safe. (Not just Our Town)

Ms. Seely likes the idea of using Woodstock- make it more positive. She suggested a banner on the Green or across the street?

Ms. Davies wants to get it done but will make changes. Ms. Riley wants to do it sooner rather than later.

Chair Spector proposed that EDC set aside \$3,800 for the project with wording that is in place by tomorrow evening. He encouraged people to send changes to Ms. Davies by then. Mr. Lowe seconded. Unanimously approved. No roll call taken.

b. Expand outdoor dining options

Chair Spector presented the proposal. Last month the EDC explored two options:

1. Add to existing picnic tables
2. Tents and tables like Hanover some with dining service

They surveyed 16 village restaurant owners and 8 responded. Only 3 said it would help. Some said that it couldn't hurt. The picnic table option had the most support. Chair Spector reported that Town Emergency Manager David Green doesn't think that tents can be done because of state rules. The costs for tables to match the existing tables made by Shackleton Thomas are \$900 + \$300 for umbrella.

The Woodstock Inn purchased similar tables for \$110 + same umbrella.

Mr. Belisle reported that a donor has offered to subsidize the cost to keep the same look as the existing tables.

The current tables are not cleaned but they have a hanging tag asking users to clean them. Chair Spector proposed purchasing five from Shackleton and putting two on the Green and three on the Pi site. More can be added if there is demand.

Mr. Kahn thinks that there should be four on Pi. The owners of the property want the Village to add liability and have an MOU of how tables will be used. There needs to be sufficient trash receptacles. He wondered if ST can produce them quickly.

Mr. Belisle said that ST knows that we are talking about this and is aware of the concerns of aesthetics and design. For the original tables, there was lots of conversation about the design but there was consensus.

Ms. Seely wants to confirm that the Town will continue with the trash collection and wondered about compost.

Mr. Kahn thinks that both the boards will continue with the collection. They have ugly bins available.

Mr. Niles hopes that if we want more that the subsidy will continue. Mr. Belisle is confident that it will be available.

Mr. Kahn asked to increase the total to six.

Ms. Finlayson reported that the one in front of welcome center is used all the time, but it is not easy to clean and is unattractive. She would like two smaller tables there without umbrellas. She also wanted to see if there is help from the town to put them out (Mr. Belisle and his Dad currently do it.) Mr. Belisle's Dad also sands and refinishes them. Mr. Belisle said tables have a life to them. Keep it local.

Ms. Seely wants to add money to help with maintenance costs. She suggested \$600/yr is for all the tables. (Mr. Belisle currently pays \$400/yr.)

Chair Spector proposed six tables (at \$410 per table) plus \$600 annual maintenance plus liability insurance plus trash cans for Pi (similar to other locations) for a maximum total of \$4,000.

Ms. Seely seconded. Unanimously approved. No roll call taken.

c. Unfreezing Funding for Teagle Landing

Ms. Finlayson presented. The Teagle Landing funds were approved in January and were put on hold by the EDC in March. She stated that construction is busy right now so they want to get started on the project. They are asking for the EDC to release funds for the planning phase - \$10K for permitting, site plan, design and planning documents - to put together bid documents, so that by late summer an RFI can be put out for construction next spring. Total construction budget will probably be less because they have identified some savings.

Mr. Niles made a motion to unfreeze \$10K for the Teagle Landing project. Ms. Seely seconded. All approved.

VIII. New Business

a. Vermont Emergency Economic Recovery Grant

Announcement of the [Vermont Emergency Economic Recovery Grants](#). The Chamber has sent an email to all members. The program is opening Monday and is first come first serve. Ms. Finlayson will post it on the listserve on Saturday. Beth Fish has posted it to listserve and on Town website. Information will also be on WoodstockVT.com website and Facebook page. Mr. Kerbin mentioned that there are a number of rules that need to be followed.

b. Setting the EDC agenda

Chair Spector said that EDC members or the public can let him know ahead of time about items to be added to the agenda. Items can also be added at the beginning of a meeting.

c. Chamber funding

In February a condition of the Chamber grants was a review to make sure that the EDC and Chamber were not duplicating efforts. Chair Spector said that it is time to get back to making a plan for marketing and asked for volunteers to participate in the discussion.

Mr. Lowe said that the next marketing meeting is Tuesday so that may be a good place to start the discussion. Ms. Chicoine is hoping that the discussion will be broader than just the marketing effort.

Chair Spector volunteered. Mr. Lowe will also join. Ms. Chicoine wants a timeline. It will not a committee, maybe a working group?

Other New Business

Mr. Lowe reported that it Inn is opening and is feeling good.

Ms. Finlayson said that the sidewalk sale should feel festive.

Ms. Cooke said that she goes to her office downtown, but too many people are not wearing masks. It is aggravating to ask them to move. She feels the town is orienting to tourists and away from residents. She would like to see a mask ordinance and would like to feel welcomed in town. She will not be going downtown this weekend.

IX. Adjourn

On a motion from Mr. Lowe and seconded by Ms. Cooke, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Miller

EDC Coordinator

July 6, 2020