

Cambridge Economic Development Advisory Committee and Economic Development Taskforce Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2016

Call to order

Fonda Ripley called to order the regular meeting of the CEDAC/Economic Development Taskforce at 6:00 at the Varnum Memorial Library.

Roll call: The following members were present: Laurie Cartwright, Jeff Coslett, Deb Nevil, Fonda Ripley, April Tuck.

Minutes: The February minutes were approved.

Town Signs: Jeff contacted Nichole Gilbert at Great Big Graphics and advised her we were interested in purchasing 3 – 4 signs. Including installation, four signs would cost \$7,659 and the project could be turned around within one month. We were approved for \$7,600. The final price included a 10% municipal discount. The committee approved the purchase and installation of the signs. Jeff showed the committee the sites for the four signs (Bakersfield, Fairfax, Johnson, Waterville).

- Action: Jeff will contact the AOT. He will also look into the two county riders.
- Action: The committee discussed the website hanging from the signs. April will check with Ron Carter as to whether the SNACC will maintain the CambridgeVT.com website or if we should use the Cambridge Town website.

Town Meeting: Fonda recapped the genesis of the \$5,000 line item request for the committee at the Town Meeting. The committee agreed that before it could consider use of the funds, it needed to:

1. Develop a plan as to projects and what funding, if any, is required.
2. Determine the best use of any Town funds.
3. The cost of any project approved by the committee.

The committee discussed the lessons learned from the experience. Fonda noted that any funding requests were to go through April, who would bring them to the appropriate group.

Planning and Objectives:

1. Marketing the Town: The committee examined the four focus areas discussed at earlier meetings. They were:

- Arts,
- Recreation,
- Intellectual,
- Traditional culture (hunting, fishing, farming)

The committee looked at whether a larger facility could be envisioned, i.e. the Smugglers Notch Distillery and agreed that support of small businesses was needed. The discussion included how to welcome businesses into town in addition to the home tax credit. The possibility of marketing our natural beauty for small tech companies was discussed.

The Community Center, which the committee deemed as a small business venture, was another opportunity as the building could host trade shows and other events. The implications of Act 46, including the current capacity of the CES and spillover to the community center was examined. Use of the dorm building could ease capacity issues. The committee discussed how the community center could be a draw such as for activities including adult learning and being an information center.

Branding was discussed both in terms of the Rail Trail and marketing the Town. The idea of hiring a marketing firm to help with branding was discussed.

- Action: April will speak with Bernie J about presenting an overview of Act 46 to the committee.
- Action: April will send the committee a copy of the 1 ½ page document she developed concerning the community center.
- Action: April will contact Megan Smith for resources as part of the Community Visit.

2. Rail Trail: The committee will ask Mark Delaney to provide an update at the next meeting. The role of SNACC concerning the Rail Trail was discussed. It was asked if there was any funding from the Rail Trail grant for the kiosk. The Northern Borders grant was discussed. Jeff noted Canadian tourism was strong with regard to the trail. Special packages re: B&Bs, restaurants, etc. could be

created. The development of the Insider's Guide was explored and would include day trips around the area. April shared the calendar the library gives out that details its' different programs each month. The calendar could easily be expanded to include different community events.

- Action: April will speak with Mark Schilling and Ron Carter re: SNACC's role in the Rail Trail and the grant funding.

3. New Economic Development:

- Infrastructure needs: Cambridge Village was discussed in terms of how to maintain the integrity of the historic buildings while increasing economic opportunities. What other towns have done to enhance their infrastructure was discussed.
 - i. Action: April will raise the question with the Select Board.
 - ii. Action: Fonda will research what other towns have done and will contact Lucy Leriche for guidance.
- Increasing lodging opportunities needs to be examined.
- Do we help businesses come in and set them up or do we take a bigger picture view? We will discuss this at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Fonda Ripley adjourned the meeting at 7:25pm

Next Meeting: April 26 at 6:00pm at the Varnum Library

Minutes submitted by: April Tuck