



TOWN *of* THOMPSON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Economic Development Commission Minutes

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Via ZOOM 6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order- The call to order was by Chair Brian Yacino at 6:35pm.
Present: Chair Brian Yacino, H. Charles Obert, Brian Santos, JoAnn Hall, Town Planner Tyra Penn-Gesek, Ashley Pomes; Recording Secretary
Brian Loffredo entered the meeting at 6:52pm
Absent: John Sharpe
- II. Approval of Minutes: April 15, 2020- **Motion made by J. Hall to accept the minutes.**
B. Yacino pointed out that the word 'were' should be 'where' on page 3 section 3 under progress reports. **J. Hall amended her motion to correctly put the word 'where' in on the third page under number three, seconded by C. Obert, carried unanimously.**
- III. Reports
 1. Chairman- No official report
 2. Treasurer- Per J. Hall, there is an available budget of \$17,407.93. T. Penn-Gesek states a lot of that money has been expended already but has not yet been billed.
- IV. Update on Businesses in Town- There were 5 new businesses in town, Made in Senegal, Little Foot Day Care and Preschool, Joiner Construction Services, Patriot Pump Service and Getty Granite Company. There was some discussion about Getty Granite Company as the address for this business is listed as Putnam, this will be looked into. C. Obert says the work at Mason House is progressing fast.
- V. Citizen's Comments Pertaining to Agenda Items- None
- VI. Old Business
 1. Progress for EDC alternate- No new progress, continue next month
 2. Thompson brochure – There is nothing definite with this yet. Thompson is ready to commit funds towards this but ERTD needs to commit theirs. These funds need to be committed by the end of the fiscal year in June.
- VII. New Business
 1. Impact of budget cuts- Budget cuts due to Covid-19 leaves less money to spend on projects than originally planned for. T. Penn-Gesek proposed the best way to use the remaining funds would be to keep the \$9,000 for 65 Main Street allocated for that, put the remaining money which is about \$4,000 into the Train Wreck Park site, she believes she can apply for a Connecticut Humanities Grant to start producing some of the permanent markers with the QR codes for the Train Wreck

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- Site, the grant is a 1 to 1 match. The project most affected at this time is the pop-up shops because the social distancing presents complications for that project.
2. RFP for marketing consultant to continue with Branding strategy- T. Penn-Gesek has written up an RFP for marketing and branding, it has been reviewed and approved by the Branding Committee and was reviewed by the Economic Development Commission. **Motion made by C. Obert seconded by B. Santos to move this to the official RFP on the website carried unanimously.** T. Penn-Gesek will get this online and set the submission date for vendors with time to have it ready to review at the next EDC meeting. The Commission will invite Renee Waldron to the next EDC meeting for review of this.

VIII. Progress Reports:

1. Zoning Regulations revision- The draft was posted online at the beginning of April; it was open for comments until this past Friday. The next discussion for this will be at the next regular P&Z meeting next week. There is some concern that the public has not had enough opportunity to be heard since they cannot meet in person. Expect some changes to be made as a result of the public's comments but the regulations should be pretty close to being finalized.
2. Electronic sign for Town Hall- The funds from the IOBY need to be encumbered for the sign before the end of the fiscal year, continue this next month.
3. Train Wreck Site – budget cut, drone footage- CT Trails Day has asked event leaders to go out to trail sites and make 60 second videos to post online for people to view. C. Obert talks about the want/need for drone footage of the trails, says there is a \$500 permit fee from DEEP that would need to be obtained for the drone to film on state land, plus the cost of the drone service. He will look into getting a quote for the drone cost. Also, he states that there was a significant increase in the usage of trails from February with 1,159 people using the trails to almost 3,000 people in March. B. Santos says he has been going to the Airline Trail multiple times per week and there are always tons of people out there. He asks about using the bulletin boards at the trail entrances, he would like to use them to promote the new EDC website by printing up a flyer, laminating it and posting it to the boards. C. Obert says that he is allowed to post things pertaining to the town on the kiosks and mentioned that the Train Wreck Site had a laminated list of restaurants that were located in town. B. Santos will make up a flyer and send it to the commission for approval prior to posting them. There was also talk about the Call for Songwriters competition, see below for information.
4. CME Wayfinding Plan and Signage (IOBY)- The CME contract involved a public presentation that will now be done as a Zoom Meeting, it will be on June 23rd at 6:00pm. The presentation for this has real time survey questions to be answered while the presentation is going on. C. Obert says he has a few places he can post a notice about this event to help get participants. T. Penn-Gesek will send him an official notice once one has been created.
5. “**Nips** for Holiday Cheer” April 1 - December 5. \$10 gift card / 100 **nips** collected- There have been 28,395 nips collected so far! There is \$3,500 for this between EDC funds set aside and private donations due to fundraising. T. Penn-Gesek has some more fundraising requests out but she won't know if more funds will come in until the end of the month. There will be a press release on Tuesday stating the next pickup

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date which is the 6th of June at the Highway Garage from 10am-1pm. This will probably be the last month for collections unless more funding comes in. There was discussion about possibly trying to get the local news to cover this story.

6. "Six Months of Suffrage" The first event started tonight; it is a Zoom based DIY suffragist sash making. All the programs for this are still continuing, nothing has been cancelled including the Memorial Day Parade which has just been modified. There is a total of 9 events going on between May and October with some events that were supposed to be live being held virtually now.
7. Pop-Up Village- Both text and slide show documents from UCONN have been giving to the Commission, now it needs to be decided what to do with it. There is one shed built already, if another one can be built during the summer, there is a possibility of using the two sheds at Community Day. There was discussion about Community Day and if it is able to still be held, there may be many other events that could be incorporated with it such as the town tag sale.
8. NPS partnership for Airline Trail- This partnership is ongoing, there is going to be a virtual event for CT Trails Day, called Call for Songwriters. It is a songwriting competition for a modern-day folk song about the events of the Great East Thompson Train Wreck. People who want to compete will send their videos to T. Penn-Gesek, she is going to compile them and put them up on the town YouTube page and then share them officially on CT Trails Day. People can vote throughout the month and the winner will get a studio and video recording package. In turn for funding the recording the town reserves the right to use the recording however they want. There have been two submissions so far, the submission period is open through next week.

IX. Comments by Commission Members- C. Obert says he has reached out to a neighbor regarding an opening on the IWC, but he also mentioned to her that the EDC is looking for an alternate as well. T. Penn-Gesek says that having Zoom meetings has allowed the meetings to become much better attended, not specifically the EDC Commission but for other Commissions and Committees in town.

X. Next Meeting: June 17, 2020: 6:30 pm, location TBD

XI. Adjourn- The meeting was adjourned by Chair Brian Yacino at 7:53pm

See below for a link to the recorded Zoom meeting

Topic: Economic Development Commission

Date: May 20, 2020 06:12 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Share recording with viewers:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/us0vP4zgz0hLEp3N5UeAYLcqHZ-_aaa81ygeq6JYzhmMuzLMsVy433v0LJosnlc-

Password: 7D#tm4D7