



TOWN *of* THOMPSON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Economic Development Commission

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Via ZOOM 6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm by Chair Brian Yacino.
Present: Brian Yacino (Chair), Brian Loffredo, JoAnn Hall, Tyra Penn-Gesek (Planner),
H. Charles Obert, Ashley Pomes (Recording Secretary)
Others Present: Lesley Munshower, Amy St. Onge (First Selectman)
- II. Approval of Minutes from September 16, 2020 – **A motion by C. Obert, seconded by J. Hall, to approve the minutes with the correction of one misspelled word, page two number two, the word “sure” should have been “shore”. All in favor.**
- III. Reports
 1. Chairman – No official report
 2. Treasurer – Per Treasurer J. Hall, \$21,893.54 left in the budget.
- Projects and balances – The report that was sent to the Commission by email was discussed, it is used to keep track of money coming and going in projects.
- IV. Update on Businesses in Town – Adoption of trade name, G Force Barber Shop opened at 853 Thompson Road. There was discussion about other businesses in town that may be opening soon but there is no official paperwork for them yet.
- V. Citizen’s Comments Pertaining to Agenda Items - None
- VI. Old Business
 1. EDC alternate – No new updates. J. Sharpe needs to submit a letter of resignation before B. Loffredo can become a full voting member. T. Penn-Gesek suggests B. Yacino to bring J. Sharpe the letter to sign when he has a chance so that B. Loffredo has the opportunity to be voted in as a full member.
- VII. New Business
 1. 2021 meeting schedule – Schedule was reviewed – **Motion made by C. Obert, seconded by J. Hall, to approve the proposed 2021 schedule. All in favor.**
- VIII. Progress Reports:
 1. Community Day wrap-up - Oct 3 – Lesley Munshower was present to talk about this event. It was renamed Maker Fair for 2020. It was a great success with 62 vendors total spread out in Riverside Park. The parking attendants estimated 2000-3000 people came through. Surveys have been sent out to the vendors to get their opinions on how they think it went and if they would return. L.

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Munshower and T. Penn-Gesek received an email from Discover Putnam, they reached out because of the success of the Maker Fair, they were very impressed with the fast turnaround and asked to connect with Thompson's vendor list.

L. Munshower also wanted to speak about Small Business Saturday which is the Saturday after Thanksgiving. She is looking for ideas on how to promote local small businesses on social media and the Town website. She talked about doing something similar to the Maker Fair on a smaller scale. Since it will be cold at the end of November it would need to be an indoor event. She would like to support not just vendors but also businesses such as landscaping, housekeeping etc. that might not have any actual products to sell at a booth but have services for sale. Visitors to the area would be able to stop for food at the local restaurants as well. There is interest in the Community Center at the Library being used as a possible space and if there ends up not being enough space in there to spread out, they have thought of the possibility of using St. Joseph's as well. L. Munshower asks B. Yacino if he thinks this is something that the TBA might be interested in as well. He is going to reach out to them this week to get their thoughts on it.

2. CCGP (Connecticut Community Connectivity Grant Program) - funding for infrastructure improvement projects. Draft due 10-16-20 – The application was submitted on Friday, amount requested in the final draft was \$157,000 to produce the number of signs, in the locations proposed on the wayfinding report. Notification should be made within 6-8 weeks.
3. Marketing and branding plan with Sullivan & LeShane –The newest image was shared with the Commission. B. Loffredo and C. Obert both agree it is the best image yet. C. Obert asks what the steps are now to get it finalized. T. Penn-Gesek says they will need to check with R. Waldron, see if she believes the branding process is done yet. Amy St. Onge says EDC and Branding may come to the Board of Selectman and say this is the logo we decided on. They don't necessarily need to approve anything but just to keep them in the loop. She also mentions she loves the logo. The EDC will conditionally approve it. **Motion made by C. Obert, seconded by J. Hall, that EDC notifies the chair of the Branding Committee that they like and approve this logo and would like to move forward on it. All in favor.**
4. Thompson Community Design Workshop – November 10 – A partnership with National Parks Service started late last year to create a park like setting for the train wreck site. There is an upcoming design workshop that will be held virtually from 7:00 - 8:30pm. T. Penn-Gesek will create the Zoom link for the workshop on November 2. It will be similar to what was done with the wayfinding workshop. It will be a Zoom webinar, presenters will give some background, there will be live polling, the students from Uconn will be in attendance as well.
5. Airline Trail Z-card brochure – On the 9th of October, the Marketing Committee for the Eastern Regional Tourism District presented a final proposal to them and it was approved. There is a total of 7 partnered towns, Thompson, Putnam, Pomfret, Hampton, Windham, Columbia and Portland. Each town is putting in their own funds and it will be matched by \$25,000 from the ERTD. The ERTD Executive Committee votes for the final approval. The total amount would be \$45,000. The \$25,000 from ERTD would go to things everybody shares such as

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the design work, consultations, the passports for the Airline Trail. Money from the individual town funds will go for what the individual towns need. For \$3,000 you get 6,000 brochures at \$.50 a piece. There will be a QR Code on the brochures that will take you to CT Visit, the new Airline Trail website and the individual town websites. The final vote will be known on November 5th.

6. Train Wreck Site –There is a team of UCONN engineering students that are taking this on as a student project for their final project, their report will not be ready until next spring, but they are putting together a wish list of the final project. The train wreck video has been updated; it includes a QR code that will take the viewer to the Visit Thompson webpage. There is also an invitation to the November 10th workshop on there now. C. Obert mentions Tom Chase, a historian, states everything in the text of the video is accurate and valid to the site.
7. 6-month project to update the PoCD – EDC working group discussion – There was a discussion about what has been added so far. B. Yacino and J. Hall agree that they like what is in there so far. T. Penn-Gesek says George O’Neil had a lot of good suggestions for the EDC portion. She would like the Commission to think about action steps and setting a 10-year agenda. The Commission will have one more opportunity in November to agree on a final draft.
8. CME Wayfinding Plan & Signage (IOBY) – The final report is almost complete. Whatever is left over from grant funds after this is complete will be put towards encumbrance for the municipal electronic sign.
9. “Six Months of Suffrage” update – The six months is over and T. Penn-Gesek is in the process of closing out the grant. All of the feedback has been positive. Had to change a lot of what was planned due to the pandemic, but still were able to do every event. Some events were very successful, the online sash making had inquiries in Indiana and other places, it had reach that wasn’t anticipated. T. Penn-Gesek says Renee Waldron’s enthusiasm was a major reason that this all went forward. B. Loffredo says he was there for the finale at Thompson Common, it was a very nice recognition from the State Senator Mae Flexer.
10. Zoning Regulations revision – These have been adopted for a couple of months now, people are already making inquiries if they can do things now. There have been some interesting questions about subdivisions with shared driveways, mixed use of buildings, conversions to multi from single family homes. T. Penn-Gesek has had communication with other planners across the state and they cannot believe what they accomplished with this.
11. Repair of the foundation at 65 Main – T. Penn-Gesek, Amy St. Onge, Brian Santos and Sean Copeland of Copeland Builders walked the whole property, from the basement to the third floor. Mr. Copeland is a CT licensed General Contractor; he is going to give a full rehab estimate. Amy St. Onge says she is interested in getting the estimate and to see the full scope of the project. If it is going to be a large ticket item, she feels strongly in the need to get voter approval.

- VIII. Comments by Commission Members –C. Obert asks about the 65 Main Street project, if it is going to cost a large amount, have they thought about dividing up the project into smaller projects over a couple of different fiscal years so that it is smaller amounts that the Town won’t need to approve. T. Penn says yes they are thinking of ways to phase renovations, it will be challenging if the town will not pay for it, how to get the funds

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(small grants, crowd funds) until eventually enough funding equity in the project that it gets more serious looks from places that might of said almost but not quite.

X. Next Meeting: November 18, 2020: 6:30 pm, location TBD

XI. Adjourn – Chair B. Yacino adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Pomes

Topic: Economic Development Commission

Date: Oct 21, 2020 06:21 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Share recording with viewers:

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