



TOWN of THOMPSON

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Linda Paradise
TOWN CLERK, Asst

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Economic Development Commission Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Via ZOOM 6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order- The call to order was by Chair Brian Yacino at 6:35pm. In Attendance via zoom was Chair Brian Yacino, Brian Santos, Brian Loffredo, JoAnn Hall, H. Charles Obert, Planner Tyra Penn-Gesek, Ashley Pomes; Recording Secretary
Others Present: Renee Waldron, Lesley Munshower, First Selectman Amy St. Onge, Jenn Brytowski, Richard Fries
Absent: John Sharpe
- II. Approval of Minutes: February 19, 2020 – Motion by J. Hall seconded by C. Obert to accept the minutes of February 19, 2020 carried unanimously.
- III. Reports
 1. Chairman - No official report, Ask Me Anything event went well, there were a lot of participants. R. Waldron says the Q&A has been compiled and is beginning to be shared on Facebook.
 2. Treasurer - No official report
- IV. Update on Businesses in Town – No updates
- V. Citizen's Comments Pertaining to Agenda Items - None
- VI. Old Business
 1. Progress for EDC alternate - No new progress on this, B. Santos does have someone in mind for this but has not spoken with them about it yet.
 2. Thompson brochure – There was a lot of discussion regarding the brochures, the idea originally started as being just for the town of Thompson but as T. Penn-Gesek is on two other regional boards, the Eastern Regional Tourism District as well as the Airline Trail Planning Group she has discussed this with them as well and the idea has grown to the possibility of making this a regional brochure to get more exposure out of it. If Thompson is at the beginning of the planning for this regional brochure with the ERTD they will get more lead on it. The idea of the design is the folding Z card design, the overriding theme will be the Airline Trail as that is the regional asset, 7 of the 12 towns within the Airline Trail are in the ERTD. J. Brytowski asks if the idea is to encompass all 12 towns on the Airline Trail or just the 7 towns within this area? T. Penn-Gesek says in terms of the Z card itself she envisions either of those options of the Airline Trail with either 7 or 12 towns on one side with the second side being customized to Thompson specific. Possibility of local businesses to buy advertising space on the seasonal brochure or carrier mailer to go out. J. Brytowski

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says you could most likely ask for plate changes so that the front of the map will be the same for all towns and the back side can be for each specific town, she says to get a price quote for that and also to be sure that shipping costs would be included in that quote as that can be a large expense as well. C. Obert states that the original funds set aside from EDC for this brochure was for it being specifically for the town of Thompson and questions how this changes the value Thompson will get out of this for their money if it is including multiple other towns. T. Penn-Gesek says the marketing reach that ERTD gives is significant, they can put these brochures in rest stops, airports, out of state places, Mystic Village, once Thompson is on that program, it will reach much farther areas then ever possible without their help.

VII. New Business

1. 2020 Natchaug Epic for the weekend of August 8-9 – guest Richard Fries – Richard Fries was present via Zoom to discuss this. The original event that was scheduled for March 29th was postponed due to the Coronavirus. This event has been rescheduled for August 9th, 2020. There will be a soft start to this race which means everyone will not take off from the start all at the same time. The start time will be between 8am and 11am, 10 riders will take off at a time and the winners will be determined on how well you do in sectors. There is also the possibility of making this be a two-day event on August 8th and 9th if necessary, to do further rider separation. They will also be doing away with the awards ceremony, there will just be an outdoor celebration after the finish. R. Fries asks if there is any way he can help to draw people in, somehow use the rider packet at registration, whether it is coupons or advertisement to jump start local businesses for all of Windham County. T. Penn-Gesek asks how the Speedway will be involved for the race this year? R Fries says they do plan on using the Speedway this year, usually they use the raceway restaurant at the event in March, for this August date they are letting them use the property, the dining will be determined as they get closer to that date whether it will be inside the restaurant or outdoors through use of their food truck. L. Munshower suggests R. Fries needs to consider the Boy Scout property portion of the race as a potential issue as they might have something scheduled during that time, she will get contact information for the Boy Scouts to him. T. Penn-Gesek asks for R. Fries to be more specific in his asks of the town so that they can give him more definitive answers of if things will be possible. He says they need 10-20 volunteers for numerous tasks both during the race and also pre and post-race. There will be a few little adjustments made to the map of the race due to a construction project on the Airline Trail at that time. There is another cycling event being held in November, the weekend before Thanksgiving, that will be inside of the track at the Speedway, not on public roads at all. R. Fries also spoke about the Northeast Kingdom Trails in Vermont, stating NEMBA cancelled their major event there for this year and that no one else is doing a major two-day cycling event in New England this year.

VIII. Progress Reports:

1. Zoning Regulations revision – T. Penn-Gesek says the public presentation draft of the regulations is up for review on the Planning and Zoning website. She invites everyone to look at it and send any comments to her.
2. Electronic sign for Town Hall – No change, \$10,000 encumbered from last year and whatever is left from the wayfinding contract will be designated for this as well.

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3. Train Wreck Site improvements – T. Penn-Gesek has a call scheduled with NPS next week, they wanted to coordinate a small event at the train wreck site location. NPS has some funds that they could devote to do a humanity or art related event for the parks they are advising on. A few ideas were suggested but the one that seemed easily achievable was a song writing competition. NPS needs to expend their funds by the end of their fiscal year. She says the initial idea was for song writers to write original songs pertaining to the train wreck and then for them to perform live at the Trail's Day event. Now the idea is maybe doing this as a virtual event. C. Obert says Trails Committee is still on target for Trails Day for a workday at the train station site to remove the trees and weeds that grew up where the buildings were. C. Obert also suggests possibly contacting Webster Bank, they are a sponsor for the RiMaConn Relay, and they identify themselves as advocates of greenways. He would like to see if they would be willing to give some funds towards the design and construction costs for the train wreck site. Also contact USDA, they have money for small towns and rural areas for tangible construction costs.
 4. CME Wayfinding Plan and Signage Design (IOBY) – Kelsey from CME sent T. Penn-Gesek a brief note letting her know that she is still working on an option for a virtual public workshop.
 5. “**Nips** for Holiday Cheer” April 1 - December 5. Value of 10 cents per nip bottle. Every 100 **nips** collected = \$10 in gift card value! – This is expected to do better than first assumed, expecting to reach beyond the first estimate of 10,000 NIPS to be collected. T. Penn-Gesek is working to identify places in current fiscal year where there is pocket change hanging around to add to the amount aside for this. She is also still looking into companies to donate gift cards as well.
 6. “Six Months of Suffrage” – R. Waldron says they are making alternative plans for these events. Some events will be virtual, some dates are being pushed back. T. Penn-Gesek says the IOBY is still open to donate for this as well.
- IX. Comments by Commission Members – C. Obert says the new EDC webpage redesign looks great but it seems the Visit Thompson link is buried in there. Also says there is now a video of Bull Hill, a drone production produced by Elliot Webb that is available to be posted on the website.
- X. Next Meeting: May 20, 2020: 6:30 pm, location TBD
- XI. Adjourn – Chair B. Yacino adjourned the meeting at 8:35pm.