



TOWN of
THOMPSON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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Linda Paradise
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Economic Development Commission Branding Implementation Committee
Wednesday, June 6 2018
Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall - 6:30 P.M.

Minutes

1. The call to order was at 6:34 by Chairman Renee Waldron.

Attendance:

Members Present:

Renee Waldron
Tyra Penn-Gesek
Joe Lindley
Charles Obert
Randy Blackmer
Brian Loffredo
Charlene Langlois
Ken Beausoleil *Town-Ex Officio*

Members Absent:

Rob Mann
Rhonda Rooney
Roger Bosivert
Neil Patel
Kathleen Hebert

Mary Ann Chinatti:
*Economic Development-
Ex Officio (retiring)*

2. Approval of minutes:

Motion T. Penn-Gesek seconded by C. Obert to approve the minutes of April 4, 2018 carried unanimously.

Motion B. Loffredo seconded by T. Penn-Gesek to approve the minutes of May 16, 2018 carried with 3 abstentions.

3. Report of Chairman: The website upgrade was approved by the Selectmen last night, June 5, with the firm Virtual Town Hall selected.

i. PnZ Regulation subcommittee meeting: The meeting had good support from this Board. R. Waldron's letter was presented, board members made comments and John Filchak from NECCOG gave an overview of the zoning regulations update. J. Filchak will generate a sample section of the regulations for review. The hope is that the Planning and Zoning Commission will consider the Branding Strategy goals. R. Blackmer - P n Z seemed receptive to J. Filchak's proposal. R. Waldron - the purpose of the revision is to make the regulations more business-friendly and to encourage developers to consider the identified sections of town.

ii. Rivermill Development project: R. Waldron felt optimistic after the meeting. The developer is working steadily and is seeking funding sources. Also present were representatives of CERC (Susan Chen) and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The work is

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scheduled for the next 14 months then will continue in phases. Event space, in addition to the residential and commercial areas is being considered. There are amenities for residents included in the plan. As the Branding Plan develops, Trails will examine linking areas to promote walkability, perhaps to the falls.

C. Obert asked for a copy of the UCONN students' streetscape project. This could be integrated into a conversation with the mill developer.

- K. Beausoleil was asked, in addition, to provide to this committee a *pdf* copy of all the development-related documents, such as for the TEEG building, Wilson breach of the dam, and the pocket park on Reardon Road.

C. Obert suggested extending an invitation to the developer to meet with the Branding Plan subcommittee.

4. Old Business

i. Discussion of Branding Strategy priorities

a. Trails Committee Report: B. Loffredo reviewed. Goals for both this year and next are included. The concepts are integrated into the Branding goals. There is a list of recommended actions.

C. Obert - activities are beginning on the Airline Trail; next year a grant could be sought for Historic placards.

J. Lindley - the Historical Society could coordinate with signage for Thompson landmarks convenient to the trails. This ties into the Plan's goals regarding upgrading or creating signage.

C. Obert - a longer-term goal will be to connect trails to the condos/Medical center area, for which the condo association would need to give approval.

B. Loffredo announced that the Turkey Trot committee has been strengthened and he has stepped up to oversee the event. Rec Director Angela Newell has created a pdf checklist which will be a tremendous help. Many other groups and individuals will be shouldering various parts of the set up for the day. His role has to be early in the process as he will not have time in November to work on it. This is part of the Branding Plan's goals, so it works.

b. C. Langlois' list calls for more community awareness of what has already been done and this knowledge should boost the momentum going forward. J. Lindley - 58% of our residents work away from the area, so building a town spirit is a challenge. One concept is to reduce the number of voting places as well as post offices, as part of creating cohesiveness. Up to now, people have identified with their villages.

R. Waldron- inquiries along these lines have begun. She suggests bringing the One Voting Place concept to the BOS.

K. Beausoleil - when the Community Center was built, one of the intended uses was as the central voting place. It is accessible with adequate parking.

T. Penn-Gesek - can an hourly voter count be obtained? Possible only if a machine was tabulating the votes submitted; anecdotal comments won't be precise enough for traffic planning.

K. Beausoleil - if anything is going to take place along these lines, the Registrars have to be brought into the discussion early on.

- c. T. Penn-Gesek and R. Waldron's list of priorities and actions – created an action plan that follows the Branding Plan working in manageable steps and a logical progression, moving from no-cost or low-cost activities along a continuum. Maybe the new Planner will be able to assume some of the duties that a hired Executive Director would be responsible for. It was noted as a positive that the BOS approved the upgrade to the website, using Virtual Town Hall.
- d. B. Santos created a timeline/priority sequence which could not be reviewed at this meeting. It is embedded in the revised Branding Plan, but is available for everyone to work with.
- e. T. Penn-Gesek will compile the 3 lists reviewed at this meeting, creating a master document.

- ii. Other: Chairman R. Waldron asked for proposed agenda and action items
 - 1. Invite Janet Blanchette to review progress on the Plan to date.
 - 2. The PoCD has a page about the schools. Integrating them into the Plan and the marketing of Thompson should be a priority, given the outstanding performance on a state-wide comparison.
 - 3. Turkey Trot details are needed; should be coordinated with the Plan.
 - 4. Gather more data about merging the post offices and voting places.
 - 5. Bring the Trails work and the Signage goals together, including a plan for Historical markers.
 - 6. Develop a marketing/publicity plan. Given that the Villager seems to not print press releases as they used to, alternative ways of communicating with all resident should be developed.
 - 7. In the future, invite the developer of the mill, perhaps through the BOS.
 - 8. The BOS will be asked to provide copies of all the development work proposed or underway, including the streetscape plan created by UCONN students as well as itemized, above.

5. New Business: none

6. Correspondence: none

7. Member Comments: Noting that the next meeting is scheduled close to July 4, there was discussion of moving the meeting forward a week to July 11, Wednesday.

Motion C. Obert seconded by T. Penn-Gesek to so move the next meeting date to a Special Meeting on July 11 carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment was at 8 PM by Chairman R. Waldron

Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary *Dorothy Durst*

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Branding Implementation Committee. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.