



TOWN of  
**THOMPSON**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

RECEIVED  
TOWN OF THOMPSON, CT.

2018 APR -9 P 3:01

*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK ASST.

**Economic Development Commission  
Branding Implementation Committee**

**Wednesday, April 4, 2018**

**Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall - 6:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Renee Waldron  
Charlene Langlois  
Roger Bosivert  
Brian Loffredo  
Tyra Penn-Gesek  
Randy Blackmer  
Joe Lindley  
Neil Patel  
Mary Ann Chinatti:  
*Economic Development-  
Ex Officio*

**Members Absent:**

Rob Mann  
Rhonda Rooney  
Kathleen Hebert  
Ken Beausoleil *Town-Ex Officio*

Guests - Delpha Very, Putnam Economic and Community Development Director as well as the Redevelopment Agency Director.  
Recording Secretary Dotti Durst

1. The call to Order was by Chairman Rene Waldron at 6:30 PM

**(M/S/C Blackmer/ Obert)** to add an agenda item: approval of the Minutes of the March 7, 2018 Branding Implementation Committee meeting; motion carried unanimously.

**(M/S/C Obert/ Blackmer)** to approve the minutes of March 7, 2018 as presented carried unanimously.

**(M/S/C Penn-Gesek/ Obert)** to dispense with the official order of business, in order to introduce guest Delpha Very, carried unanimously.

Chairman R. Waldron introduced Delpha Very, Putnam's Director of Economic Development as well as Redevelopment Director and a resident of Thompson. Delpha was asked to review the Plan and make comments.

Delpha Very - After a dynamic discussion, with questions posed to the Committee by D. Very and an inter-active dialogue, several points emerged. She remained for the meeting, offering comments and feedback as the Committee discussed methods for moving ahead.

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

815 RIVERSIDE DRIVE • NO. GROSVENORDALE, CONNECTICUT 06255

TELEPHONE (860) 923-9475 • FAX (860) 923-9897

- One challenge is to identify the specific corridors you want to build up, with different great things happening in different parts of the pathway
- Your Planner, M.A. Chinatti, has done a significant amount of work already. Some towns don't have this talent. The Plan appears to be looking for an Economic Development Director whose duties are primarily Marketing.
- C. Obert – The Economic Development Commission will be looking to put forward hiring a Director for FY 19-20. Now we need to work the Recommendations.
- Most of your success will be based on successfully growing your current businesses, rather than in trying to recruit new ones
- Do you have a Mission Statement? That becomes your start point, and identifies specifically what you want to achieve; it then generates Goals/Strategies/Actions. It plans how to make HERE a destination.
- C Obert - a map is being created for smartphones for linking to businesses, events and restaurants for when people come in from out of town. NECCOG is working on it.
- D, Very – it has to appeal to local people as well; it has to reveal that there could be FUN here.
- Consider finding funding to encourage business growth/relocation. A part time business support person with strong I. T. skills would handle this, and it could be soon.
- Look at the village centers and seek planning grants. M.A. Chinatti referenced the current application for the BAR grant, which is designed to address traffic flow, pedestrian access, streetscapes and similar aspects
- STEAP\* Grants are specific to a particular mission which the grant committee has identified. Look to see what category is being approved, and tailor your application accordingly. For example, streetscapes/building façade improvements may be favored right now (\*Small Town Economic Assistance Program)
- R. Waldron – How can we ALL, wherever we are, be advocates, be ambassadors – be thoughtful of how to work the Branding into what we do, whatever Board/group we are with
- J. Lindley – The Tourtellotte Museum and the Ramsdale RR Collection may not be strong enough by themselves. T. Penn-Gesek noted that there is also an auditorium, so broader interests could be addressed or dovetailed.
- Discussion of the need for a slogan or tag line: D. Very explained it is what you want to **convey** about Thompson. In addition you will create a marketing plan, which is the way you modify/promote your brand.
- D. Very - "This is the hardest part right now...pulling ideas together and launching something. But the first success will energize the town and momentum created. Success breeds success." And it the job of everyone here

## 2. Report of Chairman: R. Waldron:

Follow-up to discussion about the facebook page- although the primary page exclusively has town matters and notices posted, a second page has been added. The Community page will be open to submissions by groups in Thompson, perhaps

### MUNICIPAL BUILDING

815 RIVERSIDE DRIVE • NO. GROSVENORDALE, CONNECTICUT 06255  
TELEPHONE (860) 923-9475 • FAX (860) 923-9897

such as the PTO or town-wide event information. N. Patel commented about an unclaimed Thompson facebook page that is visible when someone is looking for Thompson people or information. The consensus was that the page should be claimed. This protects the page from being used in some nefarious manner by an individual or group. A future decision will be whether to merge it into the current page or to use it differently. C Obert noted that there is a budget provision to upgrade the media resources.

### 3. Old Business

#### a. Review of DRAFT Branding Plan Rev. 8-7-17

- i. Provide Recommendation to EDC re; Plan Adoption- After detailed discussion of the Plan, the consensus was to ask M. A. Chinatti to compile comments and notes from **all** the committee members and have a document ready for next month's meeting for review and recommendation to the EDC for final approval. Points may be substantive as well as basic proofreading. Each member should email the suggestions to M.A. Chinatti.

R. Waldron confirmed that she had success converting some parts of the Plan to PowerPoint or WORD, but that inserted documents, similar in form to an inserted photo, are not accessible for modification. R. Waldron will forward the Plan to B. Santos who will try it using some other methods

- ii. Discuss Strategy for Plan Implementation: M.A. Chinatti pointed out that the creation of an implementation schedule should wait until the Economic Development Commission receives the comments from the Branding Implementation Committee and the Plan has been adopted.

- C. Obert - The EDC is moving ahead with finding two part-time staff persons, the first to pursue grant opportunities and to submit applications. The second staff person would move the Plan along as a media specialist who can build the media presence of Thompson and support the ideas that the Committee wants to pursue. There was a general consensus that this is important.
- T. Penn-Gesek – We are all looking for a jumping-off point. Each of us should use our own unique perspective to define what that could be; it will be what can kick off our success. Something CONCRETE that will make something happen, and how you think it will work is what is needed.
- The addition of columns that 1). permit prioritizing the action steps in the Recommendations list, as well as 2). a status column to track accountability or timeliness of the action items was proposed by B. Santos and by consensus was determined to be a smart addition. M.A. Chinatti will add these to the Recommendations list she created.

### **MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

815 RIVERSIDE DRIVE • NO. GROSVENORDALE, CONNECTICUT 06255  
TELEPHONE (860) 923-9475 • FAX (860) 923-9897

- R. Waldron called on the Committee to collectively create detailed Plan modifications which are appropriate to send to the Economic Development Commission, encouraging the acceptance of the Plan.
- Then organize a launch-off Community-wide event, building on the idea put forward by T. Penn-Gesek. Every member needs to bring in ideas/ a start point.
- C. Obert – BIG EVENT: An example of a stress point is the Turkey Trot; Thompson is well-known for his community event. The previous chair cannot continue and the Recreation Director is expected to be on maternity leave in November. By involving the entire business community and all of the other organizations, it can grow to be even bigger. Beginning something new is a big challenge, but this could be ready for Nov 11. Maybe TEEG, which has a 501 (c) 3 status which encourages participation, could be a major partner.
- R. Boisvert – Yes for a major community day. Create excitement around this event. He reminded the group that current thinking is: Go Big or Go Home.
- D, Very – broader is better. Turkey Day should be a part of a bigger event. Has to be fun. Energy is important. Fresh and exciting. Get people out.

**(M/S/C Penn-Gesek /Patel)** to state that this Commission recommends that the Economic Development Commission authorizes \$2,000 toward the Zoning Regulations re-write/update, as business growth is hampered by the current RT 12/131 regulations. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Other: R. Waldron reminded all members to review the Recommendation list and to determine priorities, email comments to M.A. Chinatti. Everyone: say your piece, do your homework. We are a recommending committee, so we need to have a list of recommendations.

4. New Business: none.

5. Correspondence: none

6. Member Comments: none

7. Adjournment was at 7:59 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.*