



# TOWN of THOMPSON

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK, Asst

### Economic Development Commission

### Branding Implementation Committee 6:30 P.M.

**Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Merrill Seney Community Room, Town Hall  
Minutes**

1. The Call to Order was by Chair Renee Waldron at 6:30 PM  
Guest Paul Provost A quorum is present.

#### Members Present:

Renee Waldron  
Charlene Langlois  
Charles Obert  
Tyra Penn-Gesek  
Randy Blackmer

#### Members Absent:

Joe Lindley  
Rob Mann  
Kathleen Hebert  
Roger Bosivert  
Neil Patel  
Brian Loffredo (excused)  
Rhonda Rooney

Chair R. Waldron introduced guest Paul Provost. **Motion T. Penn-Gesek seconded by C. Obert to add an agenda item, inviting him to make a presentation to the Commission, carried unanimously.** Mr. Provost brought a prototype sign and post which he built, for temporary installation along the Airline Trail for an event on June 1. He plans to donate a series of them for that event. The sign includes both text and a QR (Quick Read) code which smart phones can utilize to be directly linked to information. In this case, the information would be about the famous Thompson Train Wreck. After the event, the signs/posts will be removed while DEEP and our DPW handle work on the Trail, then they will be permanently installed. K. Beausoleil will work with the DPW to ascertain that work on the Trail will not interfere with access for the event on June 1. **Motion T. Penn-Gesek seconded by C. Obert that the Branding Implementation Committee endorses the placement of the posts and signs along the Airline Trail temporarily for the June event carried unanimously.**

**2. Motion C. Obert seconded by T. Penn-Gesek to approve the February 6, 2019 minutes carried unanimously.** Notes: change the spelling of Witkowski and that Brian Loffredo was not included in the list of EDC/BR members who were present.

3. Report of Chairman- There will be a training provided by CCM on March 19 will be attended by members B. Yacino, C. Langlois and R. Waldron.

-The CT Conference on Tourism. May 8, Hartford Convention Center: Making Your Town a Tourist Destination. Information will be shared in hopes a group can attend.

i. Update regarding P&Z Regulation Review subcommittee meeting:

R. Blackmer, Tyra Penn-Gesek and C. Langlois reviewed the substantial progress which has been made to date. The Planning and Zoning commission has established an April date for

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completion of the review. Joe Parodi has prepared a list of questions for J. Filchak (who was absent from the most recent meeting). K. Beausoleil will confirm that J. Filchak received it.

ii. Update of the Rivermill Development project:

K. Beausoleil- the \$170,000 grant requirement for a 10% match has resulted in the receipt of \$17,000 from the developer. Details of the renovation are under discussion. –Main Street “connects” Rt 12 to Rt 12 so that fact opens funding possibilities. In order for every town department and Board/Commission to keep up on progress, a sort of Clerk of the Works may be needed.

4. Old Business

\* Review feedback from Branding Plan Presentation on February 6, 2019: positive comments have come in; looking on, people seemed interested and engaged. Some comments which came in are already in the process of being implemented.

\*Other: Two other events involving the Trails; (March 31, and August)

– The video of the Feb 6 Strategic Plan release will be shown on Charter Cable TV, Channel 192, in March (see Correspondence, below). A DVD of the show will be provided to the Town for those who cannot access the program on cable TV.

5. New Business

\*\*Branding Strategy Implementation Next Steps

a. Contact B/C/C that were not in attendance on 2/6. R. Waldron- 5 Boards/Commissions were accidentally not invited or were unable to send a representative; they need to be invited and brought in. We'll let everyone know the video of the Implementation meeting will be on Channel 192 (see Correspondence, below).

b. Should Branding look into other social media platforms?)

R. Waldron –Instagram requires a constant series of photography uploads. Twitter is a different challenge—yet reaching a wide variety of age groups is important. The Committee can create a Survey Monkey poll. Perhaps a college intern can be located to manage these expanded media efforts.

c. Should we reach out to Real Estate Agencies to provide them with the information about Thompson that we want people to know, so Thompson is promoted on their sites? About 10 agencies serve Thompson. T. Penn-Gesek asks about legal issues with listing specific properties for sale linking them to realtors. The website will already allow local businesses to be link in. C. Obert- contact commercial bankers as well as realtors.

. \*\* Discussion of the need for a basic talking Points document that will enable any EDC or Branding, or anyone, to explain what the Strategy entails and why it matters. T. Penn-Gesek – repetition is the key to success in marketing an idea. Each person will vary the points just enough to not sound memorized, but this would be an effective strategy for help with getting the word out. She will look at the PowerPoint to pull out ideas for this.

\*\*The EDC should be reminded that fiscal year 18-19 funds (town website budget allocation) are available for updating the EDC site and creating new content. The budget has \$4,755 left on the PO for Civic Plus from last year. Perhaps use \$1,500 for an EDC subpage and \$2750 for next year's licensing of the website. This amount is encumbered specifically to Civic Plus so it must be spent with them. R. Waldron will be certain the EDC knows this.

d. Idea-Creation of a Land Use flowchart for starting a new business in Thompson, or moving/modifying one, which is even more specific than the current document; this will need to wait until the Zoning regulation review is complete in case any process is changed.

e. Allow for "Subscription" on the Town's Website: this idea came in after the Feb 6 meeting and has been implemented. The Subscriber can receive the requested agendas/minutes as well as the website postings and features desired.

f. Idea- Monthly or Quarterly electronic Town Newsletter, to build on the very effective twice-yearly Selectman's Newsletter, will be considered

g. Holding a Town-Wide release of the Strategic Plan/the next steps in Implementing the action plans/goals in the Strategic Plan. Everyone will be invited at no charge, but there must be an rsvp. T.Penn-Gesek found a Planning tool that engages groups of townspeople who focus during the meeting at understanding a significant problem/situation and brainstorm the topic. A single sample pack of the game will be ordered, tested in April and the Town-wide meeting scheduled for May. **Motion R. Waldron seconded by C. Obert to purchase one pack of the planning cards (about \$20) utilizing funds in the Town Planner budget carried unanimously.**

**\*Discussion:**

**\*\*Farm Passport Program/Farmer's Market-** the Committee feels the Passport program is feasible and contributes to the Green and Growing theme, encouraging support of the project.

**\*\* Discussion:** Commercial Certified "shared kitchen" facility established for producers of small-batch food items will be considered.

**\*** Community Garden space for residents to "farm" a 8'x 4' plot in a common area, with some person overseeing the project- considered feasible and worthy of town support

**\*\* Finding/hiring an individual to develop a marketing plan/social media plan, perhaps a college intern; we will wait a few weeks to learn if a Planner is hired and that person's responsibilities/skills**

**\*\* Obtain prices for signs along the Trails, especially after the DEEP/DPW complete the infrastructure work this summer (fiscal 19-20), tying into the Historical Society signs selections**

**\*\*Keep all the Boards and Commission informed that the follow-up meeting is being planned and a meeting date established**

iii. Economic Development FY19 and FY 20 Budgets: the Branding Committee recommendations to expend some of the funds in the current EDC 18-19 budget.

They total \$14,000:

Town Hall electronic Information Sign	\$10,000
Creation of a Community Garden	2,000
Branding Community-Wide Introduction event	1,500
Farm Passport Program	1,000

Note: The EDC hasn't charged the branding subcommittee to take a look at next year's branding projects, but we probably will be asked soon.

6. Correspondence: a Memo announcing the days and times that the television program depicting the February 6 Strategic Plan release was distributed. The show, on Charter Community Access TV channel 192 will be on **March 18 @5 PM and March 22 @ 6 PM.**

7. Member Comments; none

Action items agreed upon:

- Create a Branding Talking Points document
- Investigate a college internship regarding social media
- Share video of EDC Branding Implementation Sub-committee presentation with Board chairs not in attendance, realtors, as well as our on-line resources
- Draft a land use flow chart for new businesses, o those moving/modifying operations, after completion of the zoning reg changes
- Consider working with other entities a town-wide signage program being developed.
- Support the Farm Passport Program in any way and the Community Gardening plots (Green and Growing)

8. Adjournment was at 8:52 PM by Chair R. Waldron

Respectfully Submitted; Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary      *Dorothy Durst*

*These minutes have not yet been approved by the Economic Development Commission Branding Subcommittee. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.*