

Economic Committee

Aug 9, 2021

7 pm

Fitzwilliam Town Hall

Present: Beth Lorenz, Skip Hagstrom, Steve Reinhart

Absent: Suzanne Gray, Chelley Tighe & Jim Millar

Guests: Kevin Love, Jason Newcomb, Richard Marshall & Rik Eckstrom

Minutes: Steve made a motion to approve the minutes of July 12, 2021 as read with a second by Skip; all voted in favor 3-0-0.

Beth opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Fitzwilliam Farmer's Market: Next market is scheduled for Aug 21st. Beth indicated that she would like all members to interact with the FB page. She added that they had a great 1st opening and it was a huge success. Kevin asked about the number of vendors. Beth stated some came in at the last minute and they had some cancel. Some vendors preferred it be weekly instead of monthly. Beth shared that most vendors did really well with products the consumers wanted. Mr. Newcomb stated he has joined the Troy Community FB page and will help branch out in that direction with promoting the market.

Ribbon Cutting: Beth shared that all businesses so far are agreeable with this promotion. Maybe pick a date, call the press and do all the ribbon cuttings on the same day. Steve suggested the first business contacted set the date and then let the rest of the group know. Kevin thought it best have the individual business do their own press release and the committee can do the photo op. Beth added that they can all be sent in at the same time or spread them out. Kevin felt that if they were spread out it would emphasize the business individually and let that business stand out.

Fitzwilliam Business Brochure: Steve stated he has been in contact with Connie Porter who said, as long as it was not too time consuming, she could update the listing for the committee. Steve offered to pay the cost if there was any. Members should send their updated information to Marion to consolidate and send to Connie.

Master Plan: Rik Eckstrom and Richard Marshall are here from the steering committee to start a conversation about including the Economic Committee in their Master Plan revision. Mr. Eckstrom shared that the previous Master Plan indicated the name of our committee was originally the Fitzwilliam Economic Development Committee. He wanted to know if the committee has completed any of the actions from the 2012 Master Plan. Steve shared that

the committee members have been working on networking with town businesses and explained some of the events that were held. Mr. Marshall agreed that it is very good work and said we need a vision for the community on how business friendly we want Fitzwilliam to be. Steve responded that the committee has no power or say, so provide some guidance and tell us what you need. Mr. Eckstrom indicated that there will be public forums and surveys and that all the data will be compiled into a Master Plan document. Beth asked if the Economic Committee would be helping with the surveys. Mr. Marshall said it was a work in progress and they need the thoughts of the Economic Committee. He wanted to know if we had any information on the Fitzwilliam wage structure. Skip answered in the negative. Mr. Marshall inquired if there was a better format for the Master Plan other than the print version. Kevin added that everything nowadays is virtual with interactive links. Mr. Newcomb suggested to print a limited amount to have available at the Town Hall. This would encourage folks to visit the Town Hall. Because of Covid, Mr. Marshall stated, businesses have had to become creative in order to stay in business, such as working from home and working through the added regulations. Being new to town, Kevin shared that he has heard that Fitzwilliam is not "business friendly". Beth responded that the boards are advancing and progress is being made. Mr. Eckstrom notified the group that surveys will be available at the next Farmer's Market. He added that the Inn is the anchor of the town and attracts from outside the area. Skip commented that there is inconsistent zoning and wordage in the ordinances and the Master Plan should address this. Beth's view is that all the town departments/committees need to work together for the benefit of new residents and businesses.

Beth commented about the email from Suzanne on the upcoming public hearings concerning the rail trail.

Next meeting: September 13, 2021- Town Hall 7pm

Agenda for next meeting:

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Minutes taken by Marion Wheeler