

Economic Committee

January 11, 2021

7 pm via Zoom

Present: Suzanne Gray, Skip Hagstrom, Steve Reinhart, Chelley Tighe & Beth Lorenz

Absent:

Guests: Ken Abbott, Darryl & Lois Meattey, Jim Millar, Peter MacDonald, Dan Sheerer, Dana Pinney, & Sarah Short

Minutes: Dec 14, 2020 approved

Economic Committee: Suzanne opened the meeting at 7:00pm and welcomed all the guests. The topic for the meeting was goals for 2021. She asked all members and guest to introduce themselves, what their business is and how things are changing in 2021. Some of the responses were networking more, working remotely, challenges of mask wearing, doing more online sales, and employees who need to be tested or have tested positive and what that means for the business. One thing several of our businesses have in common is the need to hire younger and more technology minded individuals. The need is definitely there but finding the candidates are not; sometimes it is hard to compete with the larger businesses outside of Fitzwilliam.

Broadband: Dana Pinney spoke to the group about the broadband project that is being worked on. He mentioned the timeline and the informational meetings that have taken place. It will need to go up for a vote at Town meeting in March. This will benefit Fitzwilliam economically as having high speed internet is a concern within the real estate market. Suzanne asked how the Economic Committee could help with making this project successful and Dana responded that the message needs to get out. He is advertising on FB, the newspaper and hopefully with Emerson School. Suzanne offered the use of our sandwich boards, put something in the newsletter, flyers at the Library & post office, and perhaps a sign at the transfer station. Lois Meattey suggested emails.

Suzanne asked the group on their thoughts to continue the zoom platform. Steve and Beth commented they like this format as it makes it easier for people to attend and they don't want to lose the momentum that we have going. Continue Zoom with our local business guests. Chelley agreed and suggested we do the business part of the meeting at the end. Steve recommended keeping it remote and doing an in-person event once a quarter. Suzanne also mentioned a new business coming into the old liquor store that will be going before the ZBA on Jan 12th and would like a member to represent the Economic Committee. Skip, who is familiar with the applicant, volunteered.

Agenda for next meeting: What are we trying to accomplish and how to plan.

Next meeting: February 8, 2021

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Minutes taken by Marion Wheeler