

Wilton Economic Development Commission

Wednesday 10/11/17, 7:15PM

Comstock Room 31

Attendees: Dan Berg, John Kelly, Phil Lauria, Vivian Lee-Shiue, Brad Unger, John Wilson, Jennie Wong

Other: Sarah Gioffre

The meeting was called to order at 7:16PM

It was noted that Gil Bray has resigned from the EDC due to relocation.

Dan Berg made a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/13/17 meeting

Motion was seconded by John Wilson

In favor: Dan Berg, John Wilson, Vivian Lee-Shiue, Jennie Wong, John Kelly, Phil Luria

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

Motion carried 6-0-0

(Note that Brad Unger arrived immediately after this vote was taken.)

Update from Sarah Gioffre, First Selectman's representative:

- The 40 Things We Love About Wilton digital brochure has been posted to the town's website.
- Lynne Vanderslice is posting promotional updates about it to Wilton 411 on Facebook.
- A small remaining budget amount allocated to promotional activities will be used to boost this piece and continue to promote the residential video.
- Hiring of a part-time marketing professional for the town won't happen immediately, pending further clarity on the state budget and its impact on Wilton. Sarah will assist in this capacity in the interim.
- John Wilson put forth an idea to establish a "restaurant of the month", to be promoted by Lynne. The group discussed this in concept but took no specific action.
- The EDC web site has been updated with ongoing commercial developments, e.g., new businesses coming to town.
- Would the EDC like to help with the proposed music festival targeted for next fall, to be organized by Wilton resident Joan Wallace? The commission asked for more specifics regarding our level of involvement: capacity and scope. Dan Berg will contact Joan Wallace directly to get her thoughts.
- Additional planned and potential events were discussed, all in the context of whether the EDC can help and/or lead:
  - o February Winter Festival

- Placement and care of flower baskets in the town center
- Phil Lauria's ideas for a Biking Day and a "Jazz and Q" (BBQ) festival

Consensus is that the EDC needs to clarify its mission and focus – i.e., whether we are mainly focused on putting on or assisting with events (transactional focus) or whether we are focused on strategic marketing activities and marketing capacity for business and residential growth of the town's grand list. While the two overlap, we need to be certain as to what the economic development benefit is of any event or "ask" before we commit our limited resources.

- Finally, Sarah brought up the topic of a "business startup checklist" that we had discussed at prior meetings. The goal is to make it as easy and streamlined as possible for a new or potential business to navigate regulations and other considerations in order to get from concept to opening as quickly as possible. Sarah showed examples from Bethel, Westport and Stamford based on her preliminary research and we will continue to work on this for Wilton.

#### Marketing Working Group Update:

- Jennie conferenced in Courtney Hendricson from CERC to discuss ways in which CERC can help us promote the town as an attractive business destination.
- Jennie pointed out that CERC may potentially assist with the business video distribution and promotion.
- Courtney discussed various "concierge" services that CERC can offer its members, including
  - Business recruiting in select countries where companies are looking to establish offices and business in the US
  - Membership in CERC's "SiteFinder" service, listing business vacancies and development opportunities, for \$650/yr
- There was a brief discussion attempting to compare and contrast SiteFinder with Loopnet.
- After the call, the commission discussed whether CERC's offerings are worth it for us to pursue, with the possibility of trying SiteFinder and/or other services for a year to assess benefit. No decision was taken and the conversation will be continued.
- Jennie discussed some of the PR Newswire analytics based on initial release of the commercial video. She will further quantify total views and from where they're coming.
- Phil asked who owns the Wilton, CT Wikipedia page, how it can best be kept up to date and whether additional promotional links and information could be added there without running afoul of Wikipedia's usage guidelines. Further investigation will be conducted.

Dan Berg provided a brief update of the activities of the Schenck's Island / Merwin Meadows Study Committee:

- Draft RFP is almost ready, pending final legal review
- Dan will provide a brief update to the Board of Selectmen, now slated for their 10/23 meeting.

Vivian updated the commission regarding the next scheduled meeting (10/27) of the Wilton Center Working Group. One of the goals of the upcoming meeting is to allay any concerns of potential member groups regarding overlap and/or competing missions.

Vivian mentioned that the Signage Working Group will be meeting on 10/16 at Town Hall to continue the ongoing discussions.

Vivian mentioned that the date of the EDC's strategy working session is TBD, as it will be necessary to consult with Lynne regarding clarification and confirmation of the EDC's core mission and goals before any significant time is spent on future strategy.

Winter Outreach:

- Children's winter sculptures will be done again this year at the Library at the end of November.
- The EDC's bonfire will be held on Friday 12/1 at Schenck's Island. We have a \$500 budget to work with.
  - o We discussed the possibility of having one of the local restaurants / coffee shops "cater" the hot chocolate and snacks. We will do further work on this, as it seems preferable both to save us the effort and to help promote a local business.
  - o Dan will call the Fire Marshall to secure the permit for the bonfire
  - o Sarah will handle the temporary event application

Lynne has appointed Chamber of Commerce member John DiCenzo as an ex-officio member of the EDC.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Wilson and seconded by Brad Unger

Votes in favor: John Wilson, Brad Unger, Vivian Lee-Shiue, Jennie Wong, Dan Berg, John Kelly, Phil Luria

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

The motion carried 7-0-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:51pm