

TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
January 17, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 5:25. In attendance were J. Wesa, T. Hanson, N. Soto and M. Simmons.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS: see Reports/Correspondence

GUESTS: Rep. Brian Lanoue, Ryan Snide, Rich Ruppel, Brent Hursey

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 21, 2018 -- A MOTION was made (Soto, Simmons) to accept the minutes as presented; ALL IN FAVOR with Ms. Hanson abstaining.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE: Available for Commissioners' perusal:

- Mr. Wesa had contacted Mark Aaron. We are not getting enough attention and should collectively contact our legislators. A new trail just approved. A map was begun in 2016 that goes along with interest in a mountain bike trail. There is a need to communicate. A Saturday meeting was considered with Commissioners to get back to Mr. Wesa about availability so it could be posted. Political help is needed.
- Rep. Lanoue said there are budget constrictions but a lot of opportunity here. People state-wide have heard about the gun range. Natural resources should be promoted. Mr. Snide said there should be more attention paid to Voluntown being the only "Voluntown" (Volunteer Town) in the world. Mr. Ruppel asked if trails were covered by any organization. He suggested signs for walking only, motorized vehicles only, etc.
- The question was asked if the town could manage Green Falls rather than keep it closed.
- A kids' fishing derby or an ice fishing tournament was suggested. Could the Recreation Commission do them? DEEP would also need to be involved. Ice racing on Beach Pond was also suggested. Ms. Hanson, as First Selectman, was interested.
- Ms. Hanson would like to hold a Community Conversations. Example topics or questions: Where do you see Voluntown in ten years? What do you need/not need? What kinds of businesses would you like to see in town? Demographics are changing; 25-44 age group is growing but they don't want large properties or houses. Boomers want to get rid of large properties. The town needs to adapt to these changes. This information could be recommendations for the Plan of Conservation and Development. Community Conversations should take place as soon as possible. P&Z could then make changes if needed. Smaller lots still require "country" infrastructure. There could be a separate night for business owners and what they want/need and where they want to go.
- CERC is holding Transformation and New Beginnings program at Foxwoods on January 23.
- Mr. Wesa went to a presentation by Comcast.
- There are two commercial properties for sale in town.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Website/Facebook – The state has websites for tourism and businesses but would have to be on their lists to get information.

Farmers Market – Time to get started recruiting vendors. Mr. Wesa reported the EDC was awarded a grant for \$8,231 for fourteen Sundays. Board of Ed approval for school grounds use has been received; vendors like the location. The market will start one week later in July and go one week later in October; July 14 to October 13. Hours will be 10:00 to 1:00. Event ideas are needed.

Business Development/P&Z — P&Z is still working on the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Simmons had information on tiny homes that are rented for one night or a weekend. A non-profit could run them for the town. A letter is required from the state.

Mr. Simmons also had information for disc golf. There is little impact and it is cheap to set up. Sponsorship for tournaments is possible. Mr. Snide said he was about to post area events on their website.

Eastern Tourism – Previously discussed

Business Directory — No report

Trails Brochure — Will be updated with a new map.

Historical Update – There was a letter for the Historical Society that authorized lead paint removal at Wylie School. They only have \$8,700 for an \$11,000 project

BUDGET — Commissioner input for the 2019/2020 budget is needed. Mr. Wesa will send the town form to all Commissioners for discussion at the February meeting. \$14,000 is being proposed.

OLD BUSINESS — None

NEW BUSINESS — There was a letter for the First Selectman recommending membership in the Norwich Chamber of Commerce.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING — February 21, 2019  
2019/2020 budget

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 on a motion (Simmons, Hanson); ALL IN FAVOR.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diana M. Ingraham, Clerk

Approved for  
distribution \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_