

Lanesborough Economic Development Committee
August 26, 2020 – Held remotely by ZOOM due to COVID-19 Pandemic
Minutes

Present: Barb Hassan, Chairperson. Members: Kevin Towle, Pat Hubbard and Laura Brennan, a Representative from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Excused: Tom Voisin and David Vogel.

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:31pm by Barb Hassan, Chairperson.
2. A motion was made by Kevin Towle and seconded by Barb Hassan to accept the minutes of the February 27, 2020 as amended. Motion carried.
3. Review Status of Agenda Items, August 26, 2020 were reviewed.
4. Discussion of next B2B event
B2B events are temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
5. How do we welcome new businesses?
Pat requested that this item be added to the agenda. She indicated that she thought there should be a formal way of welcoming new businesses to town and recognizing a change in leadership in existing businesses. Her suggestions included a visit from a member of LEDC to personally welcome them, a photo opportunity, providing a plant for their new workspace and at a minimum an announcement on the Lanesborough Town website and in the Berkshire Eagle. Pat stated that these small steps would make new businesses feel welcome, advertise their existence for residents and other businesses that might want to collaborate with them and promote Lanesborough as a business-friendly town. Barb suggested that current businesses could be asked to contribute to a Welcome Basket that could be given to new businesses. A discussion was held about new businesses that have opened or will be opening in the near future.

Barb agreed to stop by Squaw Peak Travel to see if they plan to stay in Lanesborough or if they plan to return to the Allendale Shopping Center in Pittsfield.

A discussion about the list of current businesses was held. Barb informed the group that Diane, the Town Secretary, has a list because they all get business certificates from the town and could be listed in the Berkshire Trade and Commerce. Laura indicated that the current list is on the landing page of the Lanesborough Town website as a way of recognizing the current businesses and will be included in the Lanesborough e-newsletter beginning in October. A suggestion was made by Pat to include their web addresses which would make it easier for readers to contact them. This list could also be used to communicate with business owners about the opening of new businesses, changes in leadership of existing businesses, provide updates on town operations that affect them and community events.

LEDC will continue to explore these opportunities.

6. Laura Brennan update

Laura made a presentation for the Select Board about her activities in the town.

Laura posed the question about how to evaluate the value of producing and distributing an Outdoor Recreation rack card for the Town of Lanesborough. The fact that the cards were being taken from tourist destinations, lodging and recreational venues were one indicator that the cards may have been useful in promoting Lanesborough as an outdoor recreation destination. She suggested that it might be more beneficial for us to place ads on other websites. These ads would direct readers to the Lanesborough Town website and increase our visibility beyond what the rack card is capable of doing.

7. Discussion of signature Lanesborough event

The group revisited a previous discussion about developing an annual event that would promote Lanesborough and the outdoor recreation opportunities available in the town. Pat reminded the group that Mt. Greylock Campsite Park had proposed doing a Tour De Greylock cycling event that could easily be a signature event for the town. The campground agreed to be the fiscal agent as the town cannot fulfill this role. Any proceeds could support the building of the Constitution Hill bridge or will be donated to a Lanesborough charity. A discussion was held about the importance of that bridge to link Laston Park and the hiking trails on Constitution Hill. Laura agreed to find out the estimated cost of the bridge to use as a target fundraising goal. The group agreed to support the Tour De Greylock idea and projected a fall, 2021 date for the event.

8. Schedule next meeting for LEDC

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 5:30pm via ZOOM. Barb will send connection information. This will be the reorganization meeting for LEDC.

9. Meeting adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Hubbard
Recording Secretary