

**Lanesborough Economic Development Committee  
August 11, 2021–Lanesborough Town Hall – 5:30pm  
Minutes**

Attendance: Present: Barb Hassan, Chairperson. Members: Tom Voisin, Pat Hubbard.  
Laura Brennan, and Wiley Goodman, Representatives from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
Absent: Kevin Towle, David Vogel

- 1). **Meeting was Called to Order at 5:38 p.m. by Barb Hassan, Chairperson**
- 2). **The minutes of the July 7, 2021, meeting were reviewed and a motion was made by Tom Voisin and seconded by Pat Hubbard to approve the minutes as corrected.**
- 3). **Business to Business Networking Event – Fall, 2021.**

Pat contacted Joe Prince, owner of Mantiques, about hosting the next B2B gathering. Mr. Prince agreed to host the meeting and selected September 9<sup>th</sup> as the date of the event. Pat agreed to get three sentences describing his business from Mr. Prince for Laura Brennan to use in the invitation to the event. Laura reported that Lanesborough has 150 businesses and of those businesses 15 of them are new to Lanesborough since last year. The venue is large enough to encourage social distancing and the use of masks will be required.
- 4.) **Town Employee and New Business Handbooks.**

Pat expressed a concern that this project was not moving toward completion. She stated that the task of developing two distinct handbooks, one for staff and one for businesses was overwhelming and a handbook for the use of Lanesborough Town staff should be the task of the Town Administrator, not a volunteer committee. Members of the LEDC agreed that the focus of this project for this committee should be helping the business owners in the Town get the information they need about the Town to be successful. Pat shared a New Business Welcome Packet from Cedaredge Colorado that she found while searching the Internet looking for possible wording for the New Business in Town Certificate that this committee is also working on. Members agreed that the content of the Colorado publication could be used as a template for the Lanesborough edition. Laura suggested that since we have a draft from Adams, Ma that time be allocated at the next meeting to compare and contrast the two examples and make an outline for the Lanesborough edition, incorporating the best of each of the examples. Tom asked, “Do we have a target audience for this booklet?” Barb Hassan indicated that she felt all business registered with the Town should receive it. Pat suggested that members consider giving a framed “Letter of Welcome” to new businesses in town rather than a certificate. The “Letter of Welcome” could contain a general welcome, specifics about the business that is new to the town, a congratulatory message and would be signed by the Town Administrator and the Chair of the LEDC. Pat agreed to provide some examples for members to consider at the next meeting.
- 5.) **Tour de Greylock – Lanesborough’s Signature Outdoor Recreation Event.**

Pat presented members with a revised timeline of planning activities for this event. Pat agreed to make a presentation for the Select Board on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to request a permit for the event. Tom agreed to get on the agenda of the Recreation Committee to garner their support for the event and to explain how any funds raised would be used toward a bridge that would enhance Laston Park and hiking on Constitution Hill.

At this point in the meeting, Wiley Goodman asked if we could amend the order of the agenda to discuss the Baker Hill Road District and its impact on the economic development of the Berkshire Mall. Members agreed.

6). **Discussion of Baker Hill Road (BHRD) and its Impact on the Economic Development of the Berkshire Mall.**

Members and guests were informed about this history of the Baker Hill Road District (BHRD). The connector road between State Route 7 and 8, also known as Baker Hill Rd., is a 2-mile road that was constructed for the mall and was paid off in 2014. The Baker Hill Road District has a budget of approximately \$800,000, that comes from the Berkshire Mall and Target, that pays a salary to an attorney, clerk, treasurer and committee members. Budget funds also provide \$50,000 for fire service, 2 full-time police officers and ½ a police cruiser per year. DPW also receives \$114,900 for road maintenance and snow removal. Funds are also set aside for capital improvements on the road. This group is a quasi – governmental group that could have been disbanded when the Baker Hill Rd. was paid in full in 2014.

Pat questioned whether the cost of the Baker Hill Rd. taxes has inhibited their ability to develop the mall. It has been suggested that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation might agree to assume ownership and maintenance of the road and if that happened, the Baker Hill Road District could be abolished, and the tax debt of the Berkshire Mall and Target significantly reduced. There is a concern that since the BHRD collects the tax debt from the mall defaults, there would be no recourse for the Town other than to take possession of the property.

Tom suggested that the mall owners should come before the Select Board to explain to the Select Board and the community their situation and present their plans for the mall if their tax burden could be reduced. The group was informed that the mall management firm has hired Christina Castaneda to move the development of the mall forward. Members discussed the importance of supporting all businesses in the Town. Pat asked, “If the mall is closed, some police security is necessary, but is there a need for two full time officers at the mall today? Does it take \$800,000 to maintain a 2-mile road that connects two Massachusetts highways?”

7.) **Update on Tour de Greylock Financial Guidelines.**

Laura had a conversation with Jeff Blake, Town Attorney about the best way for Tour de Greylock funds to be secured as it may take multiple years to raise all the funds necessary for the project. His suggestion was to establish a 53A gift account for this project only. Donations, registration fees, sponsorship payments can be deposited into this account and rolled over from year to year. The LEDC or REC committees could administer this account. Pat agreed to prepare a proposed budget for the event for the next meeting. There was discussion about the use of FY 2022 funds for Tour de Greylock marketing and registration materials. The estimate of the cost of those materials was \$1800-\$2300. Pat suggested that members limit the expense of Tour de Greylock materials to just the marketing portion of the budget as the registration materials will be needed in the next fiscal year. This way the bulk of the budget can be spent promoting outdoor recreation, in general, in Lanesborough. Laura reminded members that IBerkshire could send out an eblast to the NYC metro area this fall for \$400. Members agree to wait to discuss this expense at the next meeting.

Barb agreed to find out if David Vogel had officially resigned from the committee because he was moving and if the availability of the position had been posted on the Town website.

8.) **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2021 at 5:30 at Town Hall.

9). **Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Patricia Hubbard

Recording Secretary, LEDC