

Lanesborough Economic Development Committee
March 10, 2021 – Held remotely by ZOOM due to COVID-19 Pandemic
Minutes

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

- 1). Meeting was Called to Order at 5:31pm.
- 2). The minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Kevin Towle and seconded by Tom Voisin to approve the minutes as written. The vote was unanimous.
- 3.) **Review Status of Agenda Items from February 3, 2021**
Laura Brennan noted that all the agenda items from the last meeting were continued on this agenda which eliminated the need to review agenda items at this time.
- 4). **Lanesborough Business Handbook**
Laura reported that, as agreed, she and Pat Hubbard met on Zoom to begin to work on a draft of the proposed two handbooks: one for town employees and one for new businesses opening in Lanesborough. Laura designed a cover page for the booklets the featured town hall and the colors of the Town of Lanesborough website. She also replicated the sample Town of Adams booklet with the intention that it could be used as a template to create the Town of Lanesborough booklets. Laura will work with Kelli and the other town staff to fact check to be sure that the information in the town business handbook is reflective of the Town of Lanesborough policies and procedures.

Pat agreed to begin working on the narrative for the local business version by writing a brief history of the town, collecting demographics (acreage, map, wetland map, population, school district information, parks, organizations, number of businesses, etc.)

It was agreed that we would not need to ask the town to spend a large amount of money on the printing of these brochures because they could be saved digitally as PDF's accessible by town employees and business owners. Laura and Pat agreed to continue to move forward with this project and share results with committee members for their input as they are developed.
- 5). **PACE Community Update**
Laura reminded members that PACE is a financing tool and an economic development opportunity for businesses. The Town Manager, Kelli, expressed concern that Lanesborough has no charter so progress is on hold until she is able to speak to the Lanesborough Select Board.
- 6). **Raising the Profile of Lanesborough – Lanesborough Signature Outdoor Event Tour De Greylock**
Pat shared the updated logo for the event with members. There was unanimous approval of the new design that included cyclists from a range of ages and genders. Pat reported that she emailed the Co-Chairs of the Lanesborough Recreation Committee about the event and has not yet received a response from either person. Barb suggested that Pat ask Diane, the Town Secretary for their telephone numbers. Members continue to be concerned about the viability of hosting this event in October 2021 given the fact that we are still in a pandemic and the future of large events is uncertain. Pat indicated that regardless of whether the event is scheduled for this year or next, she will have the timeline of planning activities for a cycling event ready for members to consider at the next meeting. She also agreed to contact the

Berkshire County Sheriff's Office to inquire about the process of arranging for traffic control during the event. It was also agreed that we would need an Event Permit from our Select Board in order to use Laston Park as the site of registration at the beginning of the event and celebration at the conclusion of the event. Pat will contact DPW to ask them to determine the condition of the old theatre billboard on Rte. 7 with the goal of incorporating that sign for our marketing plan for the Town.

Barb expressed concern that there is a deadline of June 30, 2021 to spend the funds allocated to LEDC for marketing. Pat suggested, given the current tenuous nature of Tour De Greylock this year, that the committee consider spending 90% of the funding on generic digital marketing about the outdoor recreation opportunities in Lanesborough and reserving 10% for the announcement of Tour De Greylock 2021 or 2022. Members agreed that this proposal would guarantee that the funds would be spent appropriately and directly benefit tourism in the town.

7). **Digital Marketing**

Laura sent requests for proposals for outdoor recreation digital advertising campaign/Tour De Greylock to three designers. Their names and requested budgets are:

- H. (Holly) Terry Designs \$1,075 - \$1,600
- Kate Hocker \$1,170 - \$1,560
- Mary Garnish \$800 - \$1,200. (included examples of event registration, sponsorship samples)

There is one more designer that Laura would like to invite to submit a proposal. The members agreed that it was important to select a designer soon so that materials can be developed, and the funds expended by June 30, 2021.

8). **Annual Report Input**

Barb requested the help of committee members in reviewing the LEDC report for Annual Town Meeting. Members wanted to be sure that we mentioned that even during the pandemic we attempted to gather Lanesborough business owners by Zoom in a Business to Business (B2B) event.

9). **Discussion on Possible Dissolution of the Economic Development Committee**

Kevin and Laura attended the March 8th meeting of the Lanesborough Select Board to respond to questions related to the necessity of having a Lanesborough Economic Development Committee. They presented the Select Board with the history of the development of this committee and the current activities. Laura reminded the Select Board members that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission developed an initial plan for the town that highlighted the need for a coordinated economic development effort for the Town. That plan established the LEDC, and this group of committed volunteers has continued to meet and work on economic development goals since that time. Kevin reintroduced to the Select Board, the idea that Lanesborough needs a five-to-ten-year Master Plan that goes beyond economic development activities. The Select Board thanked Kevin and Laura for attending and looks forward to receiving updates on our activities.

At our meeting, Laura reported that developing a Master Plan is expensive, there may be grants that could help the Town with the expense. The Town is still waiting for the updated 2020 census report that would be crucial to beginning the Master Plan process, should there be funding to support it. Members agreed that continuing to support the idea of developing a Master Plan for Lanesborough would be extremely helpful in the application of grants, making development and zoning decisions and planning for the overall future of the Town.

10). **Next Meeting**

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 5:30pm.

11). **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Tom Voisin and seconded by Pat to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Patricia Hubbard, Recording Secretary