



REGIONAL COVID-19 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY PLAN

MEETING MINUTES 10/12/21

Steering Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Attendees: Mike Somers, Allison McLean, Andrea O'Brien, David Hennessy, Dean Shankle, Jennifer Kimball, Karon Walker, Theresa Pinto, Stephen Michon, Tim Thompson, Wendy Hunt, Jay Minkarah, Camille Pattison, Ryan Friedman, and Caleb Cheng.

Lodging and Restaurants

Learn about the challenges facing the industry, potential solutions and what the future may bring.

Guest Speaker – Mike Somers, NH Lodging and Restaurant Association

Key Points:

NH Lodging and Restaurant Association Overview

- Founded in 1919
- Statewide Industry Association – 501(c)6
- 1300 members across New Hampshire
 - Diverse membership –
 - From B&Bs to the Mount Washington Hotel and Resort.
 - From your local pizza shop to fine dining restaurants.
 - We also include in our membership brewers, campgrounds, ski resorts and other tourist attractions.
 - NHLRA Education Foundation – 501(c)3
 - Education and workforce development
 - NH Hospitality Employee Relief Fund

What Does the NHLRA Do?

- Voice of the industry
- Advocacy and compliance
- State and Federal elected leaders
- Group buying programs
- Marketing and promotion –
 - NH Flavors
 - Rally for NH Restaurants

Industry Challenges

- Leisure demand has returned and in some cases is stronger than 2019
- The businesses that have survived have good fundamentals and are (hopefully) more resilient
- Government and Municipal support has been a critical factor for survival. Outdoor seating moved forward with municipal support.
- Staffing – the worker shortage is worse than critical
- Supply Chain – increased costs and lack of ingredients has led some restaurants to change menu offerings on a daily basis or send staff to the grocery store for missing items.
- Costs are up across the board
- Customers – confrontational with front line staff over wearing masks, longer service times due to limited staffing, less options due to reduce availability of ingredients and limited service hours.

- Business Travel – only a small percentage has returned and is not expected to recover until 2023-24. Rents and labor costs have risen.

Impacts to Businesses

- Restaurant Sector – casual and fine dining have been hit hardest. Quick Service Restaurants done well. Seeing a shift in business model
- Lodging sector – independent and smaller properties hit hardest. National companies are faring better. Business travel has cratered.
- Events/Function sector – larger venues hit hardest. Business events and meetings down significantly. Weddings and leisure events are up.
- Breweries – have done fine, off-premise sales have been strong
- Campgrounds – have never been busier
- Tourist attractions – busy over the summer but weather didn't help

Industry Adaptations

- Industry wide the more successful hospitality businesses have focused on employee benefits, culture, and lifestyle.
- Restaurants – mobile and on-line ordering. Take-out & delivery/curbside pick-up. Marketing safety measures.
- Lodging – contactless check-in, limited housekeeping, limited room service (if at all)
- Events/Functions – smaller groups, fewer people at a table, limited congregating
- Attractions – no ticket lines – prepaid in advance only. Limited capacities in some cases

The Future

- Culture – lifestyle and employee benefits will likely have to change for most
- Restaurants – Will need to adopt automation, a split in service model – shift to limited service model/fine dining,
- Lodging – limited housekeeping/room service/amenities here to stay. Independents will need to adopt technologies,
- Events/Functions – smaller events, business events limited

How Can Municipalities Help?

- Resist implementing restrictions on businesses – flexibility is most important
- Continue to support expanded outdoor dining
- Partner with industry to communicate safety measures in support of consumer confidence
- Grants to independent and small businesses to adopt technologies/automation
- Grants in support of HVAC upgrades –mitigation technologies
- Affordable housing policies in support of workforce – zoning, planning

Additional

- Businesses who continue to adapt will rise up and do well.
- Where are the workers? Older workers have retired, young families need someone at home with the kids, college kids find it a big hassle to get tested when returning o campus and are foregoing jobs.
- How has Airbnb been impacted? Some have gone off the market, putting an increased burden on affordable housing.
- How much did the state lose in room and meals tax? Mike researched this and found: Rooms & Meals tax - from March 2020 through August of 2021 we are still down \$34.3M in tax vs the



same period prior to the pandemic. We weren't actually revenue positive vs 2019 until April and we were back to flat for August. I suspect we will see September/October numbers either flat or down slightly vs 2019.

Additional questions can be addressed to:

Mike Somers
CEO/President NHLRA
(603) 228-9585
msomers@nhlra.com

Development Opportunity Maps

Ryan Friedman provided an overview of the final community mapping product. These are a two-map set with both Infrastructure and Natural Constraints. As they are completed staff will send them to each community for final approval.

Regional Economic Development Assistance

Camille introduced the item and Dean Shankle asked for input on town interest in potentially pooling ARPA resources for regional economic assistance. According to the town representatives in attendance, each town had already allocated all of their ARPA funds. We then asked for interest in shared access to regional economic development services. Wilton expressed they would be interested in services catered to smaller communities and Pelham expressed potential interest in this type of service.

Pelham really needs access to transportation for seniors.

Survey and Focus Group Update

We have 63 responses so far and seeking to obtain at least 100. Please share the link again if you have the opportunity. The Women Owned Business focus group is scheduled for October 19th, others are being scheduled or will be done via one-on-one meetings.

Next Steps

Continue marketing the surveys through October, compile survey data, continue building focus group contact lists, and facilitate focus group meetings or individual discussions.

Next Meeting Date – November 9th 1pm

Speakers from Colliers International and NH Housing Finance Authority.

Follow up

Dean Shankle was interested in learning what types of projects towns are spending their ARPA funds on.

Feel free to reach out with comments and concerns:

Jay Minkarah: jminkarah@nashuarpc.org

Camille Pattison: cpattison@nashuarpc.org