

Town of Shaftsbury Economic Development Committee Meeting

Friday, April 19, 2024

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 4:30 p.m. Present were committee members Martha Cornwell (chair), Rick Bennett, Marita Cockburn, Shari Miller, and Andrea Bacchi. Also present was temporary town administrator David Kiernan.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one expressed a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Introduction new member Shari Miller

Ms. Cornwell welcomed Ms. Miller and thanked all committee members for their past year's service.

4. Reorganization

Nomination, Chair: a motion was made to nominate Rick Bennett, and seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bennett took over the gavel.

Nomination, Vice Chair: a motion was made to nominate Marita Cockburn as vice-chair, and seconded. The motion passed 4-0-1.

5. Review upcoming work for year

Mr. Kiernan said he thought the first step should be developing the scope of work with Jonathan Cooper at the Regional Commission. Mr. Cooper has been hired using funding from a Municipal Planning Grant. Ms. Cornwell summarized for all just what the grant will cover: inventorying existing businesses, empty spaces that could be used for businesses, and more. An intern at the Regional Commission has begun interviewing businesses around time.

Ms. Cornwell said she intends to leave the economic development committee.

6. Schedule next meeting

Mr. Bennett asked folks to send him their meeting preferences. Meanwhile he will reach out to Jonathan Cooper as regards regular meetings thereafter.

7. Other Business

Ms. Cornwell noted that the Southern Vermont Economic Development summit will be held May 21 at Mt. Snow. The \$95 registration fee will be covered by the Town.

Ms. Bacchi noted that the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference is happening at VT Tech on June 8. Check out Peter Welch's website for more information. It is free.

Ms. Bacchi proposed that a subcommittee be created that focuses on resources for freelancers and other entrepreneurs, resources that may or may not be local to Shaftsbury. Mr. Bennett suggested that an Econ. Development page be placed on the town website. Ms. Bacchi suggested advocacy session, conferences, and more. She will present a more detailed proposal at the next meeting.

8. Review of Action Items

Ms. Bacchi will work on her presentation.

Mr. Bennett will reach out to Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Kiernan will send out the contract with the Regional Commission.

Ms. Bacchi thanked Ms. Cornwell for her service.

Mr. Bennett said Village Centers in Vermont may qualify for tax advantages. He said the committee should be sure to get the word out to businesses in the Center, including on the new economic development webpage. Ms. Cornwell suggested exploring expanding the Village Center designation.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Cornwell moved to adjourn at 4:55 p.m. Ms. Miller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.