

## Town of Shaftsbury Economic Development Committee meeting

June 11, 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 Rick Bennett (chair), Marita Cockburn, Shari Miller, John Verocchi, and via Zoom, Andrea Bacchi. Also present was operations coordinator Jen Holley.

2) Conflict of interest

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

3) Introduction of John Verocchi a new member of the committee

Mr. Bennett introduced Mr. Verocchi.

4) Present Proposal for subcommittee for cataloging Home Based workers

Ms. Bacchi said there are many businesses of all sizes that aren't aware of resources available to them. She suggested that a subcommittee be formed to help businesses handle economic vulnerability, access to resources, and visibility.

Solutions might include creating a business directory, a list of resources, and a survey of local businesses to learn what their needs are. These would be placed on the website and created in print version.

Why do these things? Interest in strengthening the local economy is high right now.

How? The tool used for the ARPA survey could be used here too.

Mr. Verocchi volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Ms. Bacchi said she reached out to Jonathan Cooper at the Regional Commission. They agreed that they'd stay in touch.

Ms. Cockburn moved to create a subcommittee. Mr. Verocchi seconded the motion. Mr. Bennett nominated Ms. Bacchi as chair. Ms. Cockburn seconded the nomination. Mr. Verocchi and Ms. Miller volunteered to serve on the committee.

Ms. Bacchi elaborated: she would like to survey all businesses. Mr. Verocchi said maybe zoning would have such a record. Ms. Bacchi said the Secretary of State's website doesn't catch all businesses. She thought social media might be useful in tracking down businesses.

5) Update - Iron Kettle Spring on Route 7a (Marita)

Ms. Cockburn reported that the zoning administrator told her the State of Vermont discourages use of springs. She said the Historical Society said it would look into it.

6) Overview/Recap 7th Annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit

Mr. Bennett and Ms. Bacchi reported. About 300 people attended. Ms. Bacchi said it was an eye-opener as to what is going on in southern Vermont. She enjoyed getting a contact list for all who attended. Ms. Bacchi said one can join a Summit committee. Mr. Bennett suggested viewing the website for information. Mr. Bennett referenced an email he sent out to the committee summarizing Summit links. He said the committee might consider doing a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats analysis. He mentioned working with other towns.

#### 5. Other Business

Mr. Bennett said he reached out to the elementary school principal. He learned the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary essay contest deadline has already passed. They discussed standardized test scores, and COVID's impact on school enrollment.

The committee discussed how to handle fundraising for the community center with second home owners versus full-time residents. Mr. Bennett noted some websites on fundraising. He noted that more diverse populations create more economic opportunities.

Mr. Bennett suggested adding biographies of select persons to the website.

#### 6. Review of Action Items

To-do items include working on a SWOT analysis (Mr. Bennett will ask Jonathan Cooper if he might be involved.) He also asked that the subcommittee be convened. Ms. Cockburn will follow up with the Historical Society.

#### 7. Schedule Next Meeting

The group decided to meet regularly on the second Tuesday at 4:30. The next meeting will be July 9 at 4:30 p.m.

#### 8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 5:24 p.m.