

North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee (DDC) Meeting Minutes

December 28, 2020

Due to the current Massachusetts recommendations of social distancing and gathering limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held Online through the Zoom.com video conferencing application.

In Attendance: Sheila Orsi, Ethan Melad, Marilynn Borst, John McClintock

Absent: Sharon Donovan, Glenna Stocks

Guests: Chet Lubelczyk from Finance Committee, Eva Brown from the Friends of the Townhouse.

Meeting Opened: 6:42pm

Approval of Minutes:

August 3, 2020 – Moved to accept by Sheila Orsi, Second by Ethan Melad – approved

Sept 21, 2020 – Moved to accept by Sheila Orsi, Second by Ethan Melad – approved

December 7th – Moved to accept by Marilyn Borst, Second by Ethan Melad - approved

Old Business:

Updates on current Grant applications:

1. Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LLRP)

Ethan Melad helped to submit this grant due on Dec 18, 2020. It was submitted. One item that is currently missing is a form that needs to be signed by Dale Kiley. Ethan provided to Dale Kiley via email on 12/28/20.

The contact for this application is Elizabeth Hann from the Mass Downtown Initiative. This grant would allow the town a professional technical assistant. Priorities in the grant include:

- a. Assistance with funding resources, implementation, business development strategies & sustainability,
- b. Program to attract pop up retailers in vacant storefronts,
- c. Projection lighting or logo projections on downtown buildings,
- d. Targeted placemaking investments to streets, sidewalks and public spaces, improving desirability of downtown properties and existing businesses
- e. Façade and/or storefront signage improvements
- f. Facilities for outdoor activities, cohesive walkable downtown & outdoor recreation planning

2. Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

Eva Brown has started the ball rolling with this grant. As Eva had submitted as application for a different grant that was not approved, Christine Madore, Mass

Development VP of Real Estate Services, reached out to her to recommend the TAP program specifically for North Brookfield. This program is intensive and would culminate in a FULL day, goal creation program. Sheila Orsi and Eva Brown have spoken with Christine Madore and the process seems very doable. We look to host the full day event in the Summer/Fall of 2021 if all goes as planned. This is a no cost grant to the town.

3. Cultural Grant for Virtual Programming.

Marilyn Borst worked on this application and submitted it on Dec 14, 2021. This grant would provide programming for the townhouse in a virtual manner over the Spring/Summer/Fall of 2021. Marilyn's contact is Carey McCarthy, who plans to help with the YouTube recordings of local performers and artists. This is a Local Cultural Council pre-programming event. The application has been submitted, a decision is being made on or about January 14, 2021. Awards should be provided in February 2021.

4. Complete Streets

Sheila Orsi spoke with Jason Benoit, NB Highway superintendent. Jason met with James "Jef" Fassser of the BSC Group. Jef is the planner and architecture professional. Jason stated that they had a great chat about the NB downtown area and that he was encouraged about the project. We have connected via email and plan to conduct a virtual meeting after the holidays with stake holders such as Jim Buzzell, Friends of the Townhouse chair, NB Water and Sewer Dept heads, Highway department and any other stake holder who can join to have a preliminary meeting on the projects that could encompass the downtown area and how the Complete Streets grants could be applied.

5. NB Microenterprise Grants

These grants are for local, small business to apply for funding for relief due to the pandemic. These grants are awarded by the CMRPC. Local businesses are encouraged to apply for this grant. The link is located on the NBDDC Facebook page and is shareable.

6. Shared Winter Streets & Spaces Grant Program

Marilynn Borst is going to look over this grant. It has awards as small as \$5,000 and up to \$500,000. This grant is for creating more outdoor and walkable activities such as ADA compliant sidewalks. We thought the downtown area would be a perfect candidate for additional funding to create better walking and outdoor areas. We are looking into this grant.

7. Trails Grant

Sheila Orsi is looking into this grant. Ethan Melad shared the link for a class on Monday January 4th from 11-12:30pm regarding info for the grant. Sheila plans to look into the class to see if this grant might be viable for our town. This grant is being offered by the CMRPC.

Strategic Plan updates:

1. To fulfil the Connected Trails – Sheila is working on the Trails Grant to see if this would help NB develop a Trails map or other proficiencies that would help attract people to the trails of NB. Attracting people to town helps to build business.
2. Business Committee Development – Marilyn has the list of local NB Businesses in town with names and addresses, she plans to email this list to Sheila who plans to update it with emails and phone contact. A few local business people seem interested in helping to develop the NB Business Connections. Sheila plans to contact the QVCDC to see if there is any programming, we can bring to town to help jump start a business committee. This would help to fulfil one of the goal in our Downtown Strategic Plan.
Business Bites – the online interviewing of local businesses, will start up again after the holidays.

New Business

1. Sheila requested to be on the agenda for the BOS meeting on January 5th to give report of the NB DDC for the start of 2021.
2. Winter/Spring meeting dates were approved by the committee.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for January 4, 2021.

Close of Meeting: Motion to close meeting made by Sheila Orsi at 7:48pm, Seconded by Ethan Melad

Meeting minutes submitted by Sheila Orsi

December 29, 2020