

**TOWN OF CASTLETON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ECONOMIC
REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 6:00pm
Castleton Town Hall
263 VT – 30
Bomoseen, VT 05732**

PRESENT: Mark Brown; Chair, Ted Molnar; Vice Chair, Jennifer Jones; Parliamentarian, Mary McIntyre, Mark Grossarth; Committee Member, Martha Clifford; Committee Member (participated by phone), Tim Munks; Committee Member, Richard Combs; Select Board Liaison, Janet Currie; Planning Commission Liaison, Mike Jones, Town Manager; Eliza LeBrun; Recording Secretary, Tyler Richardson; Rutland Economic Development Corporation Executive Director.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Brown at 6:02pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Mark led the pledge.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Combs made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Mrs. McIntyre seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Mr. Combs made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 16, 2020 as presented. Mrs. Jones seconded the motion.

Mr. Grossarth noted that his last name was misspelled.

Mr. Combs believes that Ms. Currie should be listed as the Planning Commission Liaison rather than just as a Committee Member. Ms. Currie agreed and Mrs. McIntyre noted that on the proposal to the Select Board to dissolve the Economic Development Board and create the Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Commission that one Select Board rep and one Planning Commission rep would be appointed to the Commission.

All were in favor of the minutes with noted changes and the motion passed.

ADOPT RESOLUTION OF DAY & TIME FOR MEETINGS

Mr. Brown noted that in the first meeting, there was some discussion about the day and time of potential meetings, but no consensus was reached.

Mr. Combs made a motion to resolve to have meetings on the third Thursday of every month at 6:30pm. Mrs. McIntyre seconded the motion.

Ms. Combs asked that the Town Manager or Mrs. Jones check to see if the CDERAC can have a special meeting if warned within 48 hours by the Town Office.

Mr. Mark called the vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

REVIEW REQUEST TO SERVE AS A COMMITTEE ALTERNATE MEMBER

Mr. Brown noted that he had received a letter from Ms. LeBrun expressing her interest in being an alternate on the CDERAC, she is also the note taker for the Town. The CDERAC can have 2 alternate members, there was discussion on whether Select Board approval was necessary.

Ms. Currie noted that Ms. LeBrun is an alternate on the Planning Commission as well.

Mr. Jones noted that the Committee could vote to approve the applicant and then give their recommendation to the Select Board for a final decision.

Ms. McIntyre read that the Select Board appointed 9 voting members to the CDERAC and as an alternate would have the ability to vote in the absence of a quorum, that position should also be appointed by the Select Board.

Mr. Brown read the letter of interest provided by Ms. LeBrun to the Committee.

Mrs. McIntyre made a motion to accept Ms. LeBrun's request to be an alternate member of the Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee and to present the recommendation to the Select Board. Mr. Munks seconded the motion.

Mrs. Jones noted that it might be a good idea to appoint more than one alternate to the Committee. It was decided that if another letter of interest is received, then the Committee will address it.

Mr. Jones noted that Heath Goyette; Castleton Fire Chief, has expressed interest in an alternate position and the Committee should expect a letter from him as well.

Mr. Brown called the question. All were in favor and the motion passed.

GUEST SPEAKER: TYLER RICHARDSON OF RUTLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Brown introduced Tyler Richardson from REDC to the Committee as a guest speaker for the evening. Mr. Brown shared that the Committee is concerned with the struggles that small Towns face and as Castleton has been a member of REDC in the past, the Committee would like to utilize some of REDC's resources.

Mr. Richardson explained that at this time, the Town of Castleton is not a member of REDC, but he is not prepared to discuss the membership aspect of REDC. Rather Mr. Richardson explained that he was present to hear what the Committees goals are and offer ways that REDC may be able to assist the Town in meeting these goals.

Rutland Economic Development Corporation is a county wide organization that involves 28 Towns in Rutland County. Mr. Richardson continued to share different aspects of REDC and how they are able to assist Towns and small businesses.

Mr. Richardson explained that REDC assists Rutland County Businesses and Non-profits through several different programs. One of these programs is a Revolving Loan Fund in which REDC provides businesses with fixed-rate loans. These funds are available for both existing and startup businesses. As businesses repay the loans, the monies are reinvested by REDC in the form of new loans to other businesses. This program is unique in that it can help finance area businesses that are having difficulty obtaining traditional financing.

Mr. Richardson provided the Commission with a document outlining resources available to Rutland County Businesses and Non-Profits. Mr. Richardson shared that a lot of the work that REDC does is interface with government agencies for businesses. Wants to encourage the Commission to reach out with any questions.

Mr. Brown shares that REDC and CDERAC have a lot of the same goals. It is CDERAC's goal to assist the local businesses in Castleton. Some of the fears that the Commission has for businesses is longevity, specifically notes was the fact that there is only 1 dentist in the Town of Castleton. There are several restaurants in Town, and one is for sale (Iron Lantern). The Committee would like to make sure we do not lose any businesses and attract new businesses.

Discussion was had on ways to get people to Castleton, and how to keep them here. Mr. Richardson noted that the having the University was a huge piece of this. There could be opportunities to work with the Business Department at the University and the Small Business Development Committee.

Castleton University just received a Title III grant for a Director of Experiential Learning and Workplace Readiness, this person will be doing outreach to find internship opportunities for students.

Ms. Currie added that the Planning Commission just received a planning grant to assist with removing some of the issues in zoning that really don't make sense and re-evaluate and reword different aspects as well. The Commission is working with Ed Bove in RRPC and has a good relationship with Castleton University. Ms. Currie indicated that students want a place that is affordable to live, they want jobs, they want a place to hang out, they want a dog park. All of these are things that the Town can work on.

Ms. Currie noted that she worked with the Economic Development person in Bennington and there is a lot out there for businesses. She noted that new businesses need to come in without controversy and litigation. We need to think outside the box. Zoning needs to be made easier. There are a lot of things that the Planning Commission are working on. Ms. Currie invited members of CDERAC to attend Planning Commission names.

It was noted that clarification should be made on where people or businesses should go to learn about opportunities in Town. The Community Development and Economic Revitalization Commission would like to be the liaison for opportunities like this.

It was also noted that there are several businesses in Castleton that may need assistance. Mr. Richardson shared that the Small Business Development Center is a great free resource. Mr. Richardson will do an introduction for the CDERAC.

Mrs. Jones asked about developing a marketing plan for Castleton. Mr. Richardson noted that although that is not something that REDC does, the Vermont Council on Rural Development can. It was noted that Paul Costello will be at the Select Board meeting in March and he is from this group. This process is long, but it involves that entire community. Mr. Richardson shared the following as examples of marketing campaigns from Vermont towns; The Real Rutland Campaign and the Killington Valley Initiative. Mr. Richardson encouraged the Committee to meet Mary Cohen from the Chamber as well.

Town Manager Mike Jones noted that Castleton does not have a Chamber of Commerce or a robust website, Mr. Jones asked how Towns are marketing. Mr. Richardson noted that Towns are not really doing this. Mr. Jones noted that the Select Board put money in the budget to upgrade our website.

Getting Castleton students to assist with this could integrate them into the community.

Mr. Combs would like to set a goal of protecting what we have by finding out what we have. What businesses are located in the Town of Castleton. Many of the businesses that are here do not know how to market themselves.

Mr. Richardson will make introductions for Mr. Brown to the Small Business Development Center and new resident Skip Davis. Mr. Richardson all listed some of the benefits about being included on the REDC website. Mr. Richardson will discuss membership with REDC at another time but he left information about the Revolving Loan fund for Commission members.

GUEST SPEAKER: JONAS ROSENTHAL (ZONING ADMINISTRATOR)

Mr. Rosenthal was not available to meet this evening.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

There were no citizen's comments.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

Mr. Combs asked if a dog park at Dewey Park was feasible. Mr. Jones shared that no, it is not feasible at that location as the Town does not own all of Dewey Field, however, there is land behind the Fire Department. Discussion was had regarding that land and whether the land is a website. This area would be accessible by the sidewalk eventually.

Mr. Molnar also noted that the walking path across the street from the Castleton Community Center might be an area to consider for a dog park as well.

Mr. Molnar also asked if it was too late to join REDC. Mr. Jones said that money was put into the budget under the Planning Commission to join.

Mr. Grossarth noted that the Commission wants to make sure they are not doubling up on work.

Ms. Currie suggested that the Commission consider some type of Festival to attract visitors. She also mentioned horse shows as a possible source of income for the Town as it appears to be a benefit in Manchester, VT.

Mr. Molnar noted that Festivals are great ideas, but we need some place for people to stay.

Mrs. McIntyre made a motion to establish an Ambassador Group to make monthly contacts with existing businesses. Mr. Combs seconded the motion.

Mr. Brown asked that the Commission wait to establish the Ambassador group until they have had 2 more meetings and have spoken to the Vermont Council on Rural Development and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

Mrs. McIntyre would like to make it clear to the presenters that the Commission is planning to have an Ambassadors group. Mrs. McIntyre noted that the group could explain to businesses that they are fact finding and this may help to point the Commission in a direction to begin.

Mr. Mark would like to put this on the agenda for next month.

Ms. Currie noted that Phil Leamy could work on Castleton Polling to assist with a questionnaire or survey. Mrs. Jones noted that a QR survey would be good to use as well so that people can take the survey on their phones.

A comprehensive list of Castleton Businesses is needed.

Mr. Jones noted that Paul Costello is the person to speak to and to help the Commission with this.

Mrs. McIntyre rescinded her motion. Mr. Combs rescinded his second.

BRIEF RECAP & ITEMS FOR FOLLOWUP

Mr. Brown shared that he felt that the Commission is making good progress.

ADJOURN

Mr. Combs made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:39pm. Mrs. Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.