

**TOWN OF ASHFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**Selectman's Room**

**Ashford Town Hall**

**WEDNESDAY, January 25, 2023**

**7:30pm**

**Present:** T. Wakeman, R. Ignatowicz, M. Gantick, J. Calarese M. Chatey(Acting Chair)

Guests: N. Weinstock

Absent:, J. Rettenmeier, R. Fenn

**1. Call to Order at 7:31 PM**

**2. Seating of Alternates-none**

**3. Approval of Minutes – December 21, 2022 Meeting** B. Ignatowicz moved—M. Gantick seconded. Approved

**4. Budget**

- a. Report of expenditures-Nothing spent in 2022-23. Full \$1950 budget remains. Planned expenditures will include printing/mailings to businesses, services of C. Fields web articles.
- b. 2023-24 Proposed EDC Budget-The group agreed to submit the same \$1950 budget request for 2023-24.

**5. Communications and Announcements**

a. Announcements/Presentations-

- i. I-84 and PZC regulations update: PZC will review proposed reg revisions on Feb13. The commission agreed to take a unified position in support of the application. M. Gantick moved that Regarding the project under consideration at the Ashford Motel site adjacent to I-84, the Ashford Economic Development Commission is in support of regulations that encourage future economic development opportunities there. We hear from residents that future economic development is necessary to relieve an increasing tax burden and to provide new local jobs. Therefore, the AEDC encourages the Planning & Zoning Commission to consider the amendments with an open mind. The motion was seconded by T. Wakeman. Approved, J. Calarese abstained. M. Chatey to write letter to submit to PZC including the motion.

b. News from Other Commissions-Guest N. Weinstock reported that the Agriculture Committee is reactivating and L. Brauch is now Chair.

c. Correspondence and Meetings

- i. Ashford Our Town Our Future-M. Gantick reported that the goal for the spring session is to get additional non-profits and businesses involved. Summary of the November session posted to the OTOF Facebook page
- ii. ABA Update-No report
- iii. News about Ashford businesses-M. Gantick continues to be in contact with M. Pensa to support former Tavern restaurant space rental. M. Chatey mentioned the Plan B Burger Bar restaurant group might be a good contact (relocating a Hartford pub.) M. Gantick added that the Ashford Arts Council is renaming itself to Ashford Area Arts Council. Suggestion that an article about arts as an economic driver might be a good story for C. Fields to explore.

## 6. Old Business

- a. EDC Marketing and Communications (Chatey)
  - i. Promoting economic development in Ashford – No progress contacting businesses for calling. CEDAS, Secretary of State, OpenGovUS have comprehensive lists with more contact info. N. Weinstock forwarded list he had compiled M. Chatey to contact C. Fields regarding compiling collected data. Identifying active businesses is a priority project. M. Chatey to create “elevator speech/email” about ARPA as template.
  - ii. Status of CTvisit.com project (Ignatowicz)-.Discussion about Eastern Regional Tourism District promoting grant funding for Arts project. Forward to AAAC.
- b. EDC Website and on-going *Ashford Citizen* Updates.(Chatey/Fields) Henrietta House featured in January on website and Sweet Lil Details bakery will be promoted for February. Discussion about whether EDC website or Town site needs to return to marketing Ashford businesses with ABA becoming less active. Check on analytics of our page and determine how to promote it better. Also add link to CT Visits Ashford page from EDC website. Make link from Town site more enticing. Check on status of [Ashfordedc@gmail.com](mailto:Ashfordedc@gmail.com) being forwarded to members with MAD web developer.
- c. Potential ARPA Grants to businesses-Awaiting next steps from Selectmen.
- d. 2023 EDC Strategic Plan- M. Gantick suggested EDC invite Mike D’Amato to attend a meeting now that he sits on the Board of CEDAS—he may have insight to share. General agreement that priorities for this year are ARPA grant promotion, identifying active businesses and surveying them for input on our services.
  - i. Cadle Rock Property – no report

## 7. New Business

- a. Election of Officers- Election tabled until the next meeting.
- b. New Member Recruitment-M. Chatey has invited local business owner N. Thaller to consider attending a few meetings and he expressed interest.

8. **Input from Public** – N. Weinstock suggested that the commission consider operating through a Google Group account for sharing documents and collaborating on business list. Agreed to investigate cost.
9. **Member Input for Next Agenda** – L. Brauch had expressed interest in providing an update to the EDC on his business venture. Groundbreaking for his greenhouse operation expected this spring.

10. **Adjournment** J. Calarese motioned/T. Wakeman seconded. Adjourned 9:02 PM

Submitted by M. Chatey, Acting Chair