

Cornwall Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes

1/25/22 @ 7:30 p.m.

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm.

In attendance: Simon Hewett (Chair), Bianka Griggs (Vice Chair), Gary Steinkohl (Treasurer), Duncan Webb (Secretary), Oscar Anderson, Richard Bramley, Arnon Fischer, Jane Herold, William McClane, Mary Rubin, Gordon Ridgeway (First Selectman, Ex officio) Janet Carlson Sanders (Selectwoman, Ex Officio), Priscilla Pavel (Selectwoman, Ex Officio)

Guests: Nick Daifotis, Bill Berry, Richard Griggs, Neil Frauenglass

Minutes from the December meeting were approved.

EDC members gave quick background on their skills and experience.

Simon led us through rules of the road for EDC members.

Procedures were discussed on how EDC minutes will be delivered to Town website. Town Clerk subsequently clarified that draft minutes are required to be filed within 7 days of the meeting, and updated if there are any corrections before EDC approval.

The Promote Cornwall campaign was reviewed by Jane and Neil. Next step is delivering a plan to Simon and then out to other members of EDC

The 12 Days of Christmas – Bill & Bianka provided a summary of this successful program.

Promoting Cornwall program – This program will now be handed over to Mare and Bill

Gordon made a presentation to the EDC on the purpose and history of the EDC, touching on the survey of businesses in the 90's, the impact of the 2008 recession and then the effort to revitalize the area. Cornwall had taken the lead on this initiative, forming a study group in 2011. The EDC was formed with a strong mandate to drive economic development in an inclusive manner. In 2012, consultants Gorman and York were engaged to conduct visioning sessions. Their report focused on supporting home and agricultural-based businesses, addressing waste-water needs, developing affordable housing, promoting existing businesses, adding parking capacity and attracting new businesses. EDC members discussed various elements of this, including the need to survey businesses, supporting agriculture, our relationship to The Local and setting goals.

Priscilla gave a brief report on residential real estate, noting that activity is low because there are so few available properties, particularly affordable properties, as is generally the case throughout Litchfield County.

It was agreed that it is desirable for the Board to be generally aware of commercial and residential real estate trends and opportunities in Cornwall.

Oscar agreed to take the lead on developing a periodic report of economic and social indicators for Cornwall.

It was agreed that a Cornwall business be invited to address each future EDC meeting.

Goals for 2022 were agreed, as follows:

- Buy/Hire Local Campaign - run through Spring with new businesses/radio spots, potentially morphing into some other broader campaign over time
- Create a Summer event (food trucks, music, art), potentially tied into Mohawk's 75th . EDC to liase with Parks & Recreation Department
- Develop free wi-fi in Cornwall Village
- Support BOS in attracting new business/residents to Cornwall
- Monitor Optimum fiber-laying plan for improved internet coverage of Cornwall
- Advocate for improved cell service in Cornwall

Other ideas that were considered include:

- Marketing of Cornwall as an all-year round recreation destination with music and arts
- Encouraging a Cornwall Giving Fair
- Update Business Listings
- Create posters describing the history of Cornwall for the two visitor kiosks.
- Develop inventory and survey of existing businesses in Cornwall
- A tour of Cornwall homes as a fundraiser
- A mixed-use space
- Visitor interest in Dudleytown
- Outdoor summer dances

Budget numbers were reviewed, including \$1,500 for wi-fi, \$1,200 for the Buy/Hire Local campaign, \$1,200 for The Twelve Days of Christmas, \$900 for the Website Committee, as well as other programs that take the budget request to \$6,500. A letter will be delivered to the Board of Selectmen by Feb 1 confirming that request.

Janet will be making a presentation to P&Z this week on behalf on EDC.

The next meeting of the EDC will be on February 22nd at 7:30pm by Zoom. It was noted that meetings to be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month, including July and August.

Comments from the public were heard, including a suggestion for artist studio tours and musical events.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.