



Whitingham Economic Development Group  
Whitingham Municipal Center, Selectboard Office, Jacksonville, VT 05342  
**Minutes of Thursday, March 5, 2020**

Attendees: EDG Members: Gretchen Havreluk, Chair; Phil Edelstein, Jenepher Burnell, and Carrie Northrup. Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda  
Gretchen called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Welcome to Carrie Northrup  
Gretchen gave a warm welcome to Carrie. We are thankful for her interest.

Approve Minutes of January 23, 2020 meeting:  
**A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2020 as written, seconded by Jenepher Burnell, two in favor, two abstained.**

Fire Department/EMS – update from previous meeting  
Skip over until Seth is available.

School Leadership Support – invite to a meeting  
Tabled to next meeting.

Chamber Update-Rewrite Whitingham description for Deerfield Valley Real Estate Magazine  
Gretchen pulled up the Chamber's website. Under "services" only Wilmington comes up but when you go to "more" and "towns" all towns come up. They are having a staff change right now but this problem will be addressed in the near future.

There is a lot on the chamber website about Jacksonville history and a bit on Whitingham history. It would be good to combine the two to list as "Whitingham/Jacksonville", add current information, including a link to the town website, and blend the history of the two villages together. Carrie questioned who are we targeting with the information on the Chamber website? It would be a visitor, the information provided should be exciting and then direct them to our town website.

Keep the "more" with the historical information but under "services" we want to be added and include current information. Both spots should be linked to our "visit us" tab on the website.

Carrie volunteered to write up information, just a few paragraphs, for the Chamber site. Phil suggested she look at the Hungry Lion Bike Tour website and include a link also.

**DUES: A motion was made by Carrie, seconded by Gretchen to pay the \$295 Chamber of Commerce dues from 10/1/19-9/30/21, all in favor.**

Real Estate Magazine Description of Whitingham: Only the Deerfield Valley Real Estate magazine has a blurb of the local towns. Gig created a very rough draft of a new write-up for the next magazine. Carrie was wrangled into writing a short description for the magazine to target folks to move here.

What we like about living here: Close to Mt Snow, quiet, idyllic, off the beaten path, small community with a big heart, Maple Fest, Hungry Lion Bike Tour, home town feel, close to ski resorts,

Deerfield Valley News Map – Gretchen spoke with DV News about the restaurant map. Jacksonville is listed because there once was a restaurant here. There are no restaurants in Whitingham so it is not mentioned on the map. All the restaurants listed have paid to be listed on that page. Remedy Wine Bar does not pay so they are not listed on the map.

Visitor's Guide Gretchen picked up a Visitors Guide from the Chamber that has some information about Whitingham in it, she said we might consider advertising in the guide.

Connectivity Update We have had more than 200 responses to the broadband survey so far, Phil thinks that folks should be pushing the survey starting at the beginning of next week because it closes on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

VTel tower is up and running. They are looking to improve their speeds everywhere that they have towers, they expect to have roaming agreements for cell service with T-Mobile and AT&T imminently.

List of activities to do in and around Whitingham for website

There is a list on the town website under "our town" of Whitingham things to do. We discussed broadening the list to include surrounding areas.

Southern Vermont Natural History Museum  
Zoar Outdoor now owned by Berkshire East  
EZ Riders Snowmobiling  
Clark Art Institute  
Marlboro Music Festival  
MassMoca  
Bennington Museum  
Historic Deerfield  
Some music festival in Greenfield  
Mount Greylock in North Adams  
Poet's Seat Tower in Greenfield, lots of hiking trails  
Molly Stark state park  
Kringle and Yankee Candle companies

We want a perfect website before we start advertising. We need to add more content, such as the list above to the website, figure out where to add it.

Phil is concerned about starting a multi-media campaign before we have good internet throughout the town.

Jen suggests we need to start working on “who do we want to market to” “what do we want to say”? Gretchen said the marketing company will help us with that – the general campaign is to get families to move to Whitingham.

Jen questioned if there is positive things to say about the school that we can advertise? We already have fiber along route 100. We can start advertising now even though we don't have new internet.

#### Review Action Items:

Invite school leadership to next meeting.

Fire Dept and EMS on next agenda

Gretchen will contact the Chamber about what we can change on their website.

Gig – add link to EZ Riders website on Whitinghamvt.org as well as link to trail map (we currently have a pdf of the map).

Carrie – write a short blurb for the real estate magazine.

Carrie – write a longer write up for the website

Jen – work on things to do in surrounding area

Next meeting: Thursday, March 26 at 6pm.

#### Adjourn

Gretchen adjourned the meeting at 7:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray

#### **FUTURE MEETING TOPICS:**

##### **March 2020**

Annual Reorganization

School Leadership

FD-EMS update

Review write ups by Jen and Carrie

##### **April 2020**

Consider joining the Bi-Town group

Determine best way to advertise to the tour buses that frequent Town Hill and Hogback Mtn.

Photograph locals at their place of business for social media/marketing

Record brief interviews with local workers for social media/marketing

Encourage the creation of new age/marketing/social media committee

Encourage students to join either the WEDG or the proposed media/marketing committee

Invite students to help create videos, take photos

Invite students to join the proposed marketing/social media committee

Advertise across the web

Ask Marli for professional help/guidance

Ask Patience Merriman to create short videos

Marketing to encourage families to move to town/connectivity needs

## **May 2020**

Expand the list of resources for our businesses

Marketing of local businesses

Figure out how to support a declining business

Figure out how to support Briggs with sale or transition of building