

Whitingham Economic Development Group

Whitingham Municipal Center, Selectboard Office, Jacksonville, VT 05342

**Minutes of** **Tuesday, October 24, 2017**

Attendees: Gretchen Havreluk, Jenepher Burnell, Phil Edelstein and Gig Zboray.

Gretchen called the meeting to order at 7:30am. There were two additions to the agenda; Press Release from Laura Sibilia (future of the rural economy) and CEDS renewal.

Approval of September 2017 Minutes: Tabled until next meeting.

Town Website Update: Stephen Groundwater did not receive all the specs for building the site from the designer until well after he had originally planned to be done with the project. As he is a volunteer and we would like him to complete the project Gig has told Stephen that there is no rush, if we get the site up and running by the spring that would be fine.

Whitingham Brochures: Tabled until the map is updated.

Whitingham Village Center Designation Renewal Application review: Gig reviewed and edited the preliminary map and returned it to Jeff Nugent to make changes. EDG will do a thorough review of the application at the November meeting in order to finalize it for submission.

Connectivity Summit November 1st 1-4 Dover Town Hall: Gretchen plans to attend and Phil will if his schedule will allow it.

Town Report Gig will review all the Minutes for the past year and draft a report for inclusion in the Town’s annual Town Report.

Budget for FY 2018-2019 prior year budgets have been $2,100, we might consider increasing the budget to cover the Conway School expense. Gig will ask Almira to print out and EDG budget summary, the group will work on the budget at the next meeting.

Press Release Laura Sibilia sent out a notice of the “Vermont Rural Caucus Invites Testimony on the Future of the Rural Economy”, a public hearing to be held at the Vermont State House in Montpelier from 5-7pm on Tuesday, November 7th. Written testimony will be accepted. EDG will draft a letter. Topics in the letter will include:

*Taxes* – education tax rate has a huge impact on rural growth. Property owners are trying to sell their properties because they cannot afford their taxes. Any business expansion is hindered by the tax rate.

*Work force* is a challenge because we don’t have new people moving into the area.

*Population* – according to Governor Phil Scott, the Vermont workforce loses 6 employees every day.

*Broadband* infrastructure is very weak.

*Act 250* is a hurdle many potential new businesses don’t want to take due to the time and expense of the process.

*State mandates* are enacted that might make sense in the northern portion of the state but with the rural nature of the southern portion of the state make absolutely no sense down here.

CEDS renewal The EDG discussed updates that were necessary on the 2017 CEDS Project Submission for the Jacksonville Village Flood Hazard Mitigation project. Gig will work on it and send it out to the group for review.

Next meeting: November 28, 2017 at 7:30am. River Corridors public meeting Wednesday, November 29th at 6pm in the Municipal Center.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49am.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray