WHITINGHAM
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Whitingham Economic Development Group
Minutes of Thursday, November 5, 2026

Attendees: EDG Members: BR Delaney, James Weber, and Emily Obringer. Others: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30pm.

Introduction and Welcome of Members Emily Obringer was welcomed to the group and introduced herself. She moved to town in August, first intro to Economic Development was her work through the Whitingham Community Trust that she is on the board of; professionally she is assistant director of a philanthropic department of a non-profit organization whose budget is about $18M per year, so she has experience with fundraising. Emilly is experienced with community engagement.

James Weber, former Selectboard member, owner of local B&B, general manager of electric company. He is a strong force behind why EDG restarted this year. He is happy to see this coming back to life.

BR Delaney, moved to town in 2021, owner of Crow Hollow including Field Stone Artistry (high end furniture maker), Weeping Willow Yoga, and producer of large-scale entertainment events.

Gig Zboray is Selectboard Administrator and acts as clerk of the EDG.

Additions or Changes to Agenda none

Review of Additional Potential Members Phil Edelstein and Emily Carris-Duncan had expressed interest in joining the group; they would both be great additions.

Review of Meeting Frequency & Timing

Adopt Schedule EDG meetings will be the first Thursday of the month at 6:30pm in the Selectboard office and/or remote.

Publish as Required Notice and agenda will be posted as required.

Discussion of EDG Mission Statement
Review of draft BR Delaney created this draft for the group as a starting point: "To be the guiding voice of business for Whitingham, establishing strategies for economic growth, promoting local commerce, and developing programs and services that help revitalize the region and help the local businesses and community for flourish."

Addition & Subtraction Notes Emily suggested changing "guiding voice" which suggests leadership to supportive.

Development Timeline we hope to have the mission statement, goals and strategic objectives edited and finalized during the December meeting.

Strategic Goals:

1.1 Coordination with local and state agencies to add resources to EDG & promote to local businesses.
2.1 Survey local businesses to better understand priorities and deficiencies that may exist.
3.1 Develop a more robust method for revitalization within the local community.
4.1 Strategizing with town departments/committees to coordinate opportunities for development.
5.1 Cooperation with regional partners to strengthen area businesses and communities.

Mr. Weber noted that Great Blue Research does municipality research (surveys); they come in to figure out what questions to ask. James says their results are really very good but they are expensive. Stowe does it every certain number of years. Stowe's was 3 months start to finish. James will try to find the Stowe survey and send to all of us to review.

Review of Town Plan Policies

Plan and promote development of small businesses "*that fit into Whitingham's small-town rural character*" Some concern expressed about what would fit and why would we exclude businesses – other than a data center or a huge mill.

Maintain and strengthen the economic climate for agriculture and forest products industries we have many loggers in town, every year a professional logger group comes to town for training, how could EDG support this? BR mentioned the Game of Logging training and how to partner the agencies.

Support tourism that draws on the character of Whitingham James says the majority of visitors staying at his B&B come to town for weddings, hiking or are bicycle riders. Mapping trails and bike routes could go a long way for us.

Assist providing economic development information, permit guidance, and community facilities and services improvements this might exist but how do people find it

Focus recruitment efforts on companies, which provide jobs that are stable, and year-round, with competitive wages and skills training programs, are environmentally conscious, and that support efforts to provide childcare, family leave, and flex time. James thinks there are opportunities here, if we tried it should not be that hard. Can we convince the citizens to want that?

Encourage development in village centers. Learn about the Village tax credits to help property owners and businesses. The Village of Jacksonville board would like to be supportive of Village growth.

There was great discussion on many topics. We didn't get to the rest of the agenda.

Action Items

Development of Mission Statement EDG members to review and edit the mission state.

Approval of October 2026 Minutes
A motion was made by James Weber to approve the Minutes of October, seconded by BR Delaney, all in favor.

Adjournment
A motion was made at 7:55pm by James Weber to adjourn, seconded by BR Delaney, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray