



## Whitingham Economic Development Group

Whitingham Municipal Center, Selectboard Office, Jacksonville, VT 05342

### **Minutes of Thursday, March 28, 2019**

Attendees: EDG Members: Gretchen Havreluk, Phil Edelstein, Kyle Frey and Jenepher Burnell. Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Gretchen called the meeting to order at 6:09PM. There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

Elect Chair and Vice Chair:

**Jenepher nominated Gretchen to serve as Chair for one year, seconded by Phil, all in favor.**

**Jenepher nominated Phil to serve as Vice-Chair for one year, seconded by Kyle, all in favor.**

Approve minutes from February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting:

**A motion to approve the Minutes of February 28, 2019 was made by Jenepher, seconded by Phil, all in favor.**

Website update:

Gig provided an update of the status of the website – there have been some problems with Google Search, Stephen Groundwater is working on it. The old site is currently a “beta” site so it confuses Google. Gig had given Stephen permission to take down the old site.

Phil would like to learn how to do Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to get more traffic onto the website. Gretchen noted that we need to make sure the new website is in top form. Each EDG member should go through each page of the website searching for any typos, misinformation, odd or too many repeat photos, missing links or wrong links, etc.

Gift Baskets update:

Gig and Jen shopped for items to include in the gift bags for Stephen and Marli, we still need to purchase the actual bags from Christos Contakos. EDG members signed thank you notes.

Whitingham website on business websites initiative:

Phil will draft a letter to the local businesses asking them to include a link to the town website on their website.

Marketing Whitingham – video, mini state to stay, families to move here:

Kyle mentioned that he implements dynamic text in his website with buzz words for the Google SEO. He links to Trip Advisor and Yelp websites. He puts a lot of information in Google My Business. He spends about an hour to an hour and half each week on marketing.

Phil questioned if Kyle thought we needed to hire someone to do all of that for Whitingham. Kyle thinks highly of Rachel (*what's her last name??*). For the first month it would be a lot of work, she charges \$65 per hour.

Discussion of what the SEO should include: A safe place to raise your children, new school buildings. Jen questioned everyone's definition of community and that the website should include those things (locals, second homeowners, businesses, schools, groups, activities, library).

Before we move to get a marketing person, we need to make sure our website is stellar. After discussion it was agreed that each EDG member should go through the website and write down their thoughts, concerns etc. and we will look over those lists at the next meeting.

Networking Event:

The library has a plan to offer classes to local businesses. EDG would like to collaborate with them.

Blueberry Festival:

Gig received a call from Janet Boyd asking if the town would like to participate in the Blueberry Festival. They have reserved Friday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> for Jacksonville/Whitingham events. They could help us get a band and help with kids events. Having a pop-up Farmers Market was mentioned, Kyle will ask Kristen Breeden if she would be interested in organizing it. Gretchen will ask Mike Mandracia if he would be interested in organizing a car show. Kyle noted that Jen Beckwith had mentioned to him that she is willing to offer a portion of her hair studio for special events.

Gig spoke with Janet Boyd, the festival could help us get a band but they would not pay for it. She estimated a cost of about \$500. She suggested the Jacksonville Blues Band. She also suggested coordinating with Dean who is renting Briggs Automotive to run a motorcycle show. The BB Festival will provide balloons if they get their usual donation. They also do advertising.

Map for Kiosk:

Gig will order a new map for the Kiosk in front of the Municipal Center from Jeff Nugent of the WRC. The map will look similar to the map in the bike tour brochure but will not pinpoint the historic sites. She will have it sealed in plastic at Staples.

Review Action Items

Phil – draft letter to businesses

Everyone – review website, make notes

Jen – collaborate a meeting with the library

Kyle – ask Kristen to organize a pop-up farmers market

Gretchen – ask Mike to organize a car show

Gig – try to enlarge Whitingham sidewalk document from 2006

Next meeting will be April 25th at 6pm.

Possible members: Seth Boyd and Ann Coleman – someone should invite them to the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray