

UNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Jan 6th, 2019 *DRAFT* Minutes

Note: Decisions and commitments made in ***bold italic***.

Present: Larry K., Ellen B., Tony A. (6:05), Kari Hulva (6:05), Najean S. (6:30)

Unexcused:

Excused: Jean B.

Guests:

ITEM 1: INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS

None

ITEM 2: REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

December 2nd minutes

Larry moves to accept the minutes, Kari H 2nd, all in favor - motion passes unanimously

ITEM 3: REVIEW FINANCIALS

Refers to document on TIF accounting spreadsheet

2 grants were turned in 1100 for Ice Racers, and 1,500 for UBx (merchandise) and paid out on 11/12. Spreadsheet indicates both amounts went to Ice Racers (incorrectly - this needs to be corrected).

Check on FOLW grant from 6/19 - should it have come out of Community Grant or Trail Appropriations? How much of that money was spent?

Ask Kari Hunt (Town Clerk) to fix errors as noted above.

ITEM 4: REVIEW GRANT APPLICATIONS AND PROGRESS

none

ITEM 5: CHARGING STATIONS

No updates

ITEM 6: UNITY POND ICE RACERS

Larry reports that a track has been staked out, and several sleds have been testing the track. The preparations and testing was entertaining to watch. Larry also reports about 12" of ice in front of his property. Insurance and permits are acquired. There could be up to 40 sleds coming from Northern Maine.

Larry sent a letter to a property owner to see if they might be able to plow a nearby field for parking.

How can we encourage local businesses / help them to capitalize on the people who will attend? For example, some Air BnB's plan to reopen for the race weekends. (Check back on this to see if they get used).

Advertising on the Unity Snow Racers Facebook Page?

They have their own posters being made that can be posted around town. Kari Hulva also suggests the Ice Racers might want to make their own banners for pre-race advertising.

Larry asks Najean to get the word out through UBx and suggest they might take advantage - display banners / offer specials, etc.

ITEM 7: UNITY FARM DROP UPDATE

Kari Hulva - we are going through the first winter. Right now many purchasers are those who were purchasing direct from the farmers already. They are looking for specific items (meat/eggs), cold storage vegetables are not as popular. UBr will pay for a refrigerator at the Community Center to allow for more flexible pickups (2 day window vs. 2 hour window).

Unity has been offered the Portland FarmDrop to supply due to illness in FarmDrop management. This has the potential to increase the vendors on the Unity site as well.

Larry asks about the shelving and refrigeration that were a part of the original grants - we need receipts and invoices to close out the grant accounting.

Tony asks about the Waterville area that we might move into. Kari Hulva doesn't think we have built the brand and value enough yet. He hopes the drop off fridge will help

Kari will remind Hannah from FarmDrop for invoices.

ITEM 8: UBx UPDATE

Shirts and hats project is underway. They currently are running low on merchandise - just a few t-shirts left, and will order more (including hats) by the end of the month.

UBx is planning an Easter Celebration, scheduling dates, - they are purchasing a bunny costume with proceeds from the Yuletide celebration. They'll have an egg hunt and brunch and some other activities.

See Larry's comment from Ice Racers (Item 6).

Najean will email local business owners so they can plan advertising if they want. She will direct people to Tony A. for questions.

ITEM 9: MARKET OF UNITY UPDATES

Larry: Dormant at this time of year, but he has put out a lot of marketing cards (at the Bangor Mall Craft Fair, for example). Should they open the market to yard sales? There has been some interest in this, maybe one Sat. a month? Tony recommends recording license plates in case of people leaving their items / dumping.

[Bangor Mall Craft Fair will happen again the weekend of Feb 15th and 22nd. They have a FB page for contact]

ITEM 10: NEW IDEAS AND PROJECTS FOR 2020

Larry - a community center large enough to “hold the community,” for town meetings, town and recreational events, commercial kitchen?, indoor winter market. Perhaps as an expansion of the Town Office.

Najean - a small stage, make it easy to involve families/kids. It could be rented out for a variety of town and personal events, and utilize local businesses for catering and other services. It could bring people in from surrounding towns for events.

Tony reviewed the history of the building of the current town office, suggesting that we learn from past experiences.

Larry - any project like this, we will need to think about a warrant (for next year? Or this year - to gauge community feeling?) He suggests having a concrete “charge,” when creating a committee to develop the project. Again, we need to explain and inform people about what TIF funds (tax income that would normally be turned over to the state).

This will be added to the Feb meeting for further discussion.

Kari Hulva - Comprehensive marketing strategy for local farmer’s, etc. an “Eat Local” campaign. Perhaps utilizing a college student intern to develop and distribute materials. Develop some events. Take over some of the kind of work that UBr was doing.

A dedicated person who is paid to do the work is likely to be more successful than trying to rely solely on volunteer efforts.

Can we find a town of similar size/location as Unity to see how they have utilized TIF funds and what has been successful?

ITEM 11: REPORT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Due by the end of Jan. for inclusion in the annual report. We may be able to review a draft at Feb. meeting.

ITEM 12: ITEMS FOR TOWN WARRANT

Tabled for February. Look for input from selectboard.

ITEM 13: OPEN FLOOR

The Holiday Decor Lighting Competition program did not occur, funds were not disbursed, but UBx is interested in taking on the project and will add it to their Holiday planning items for the next holiday season.

Larry has noticed fewer fish in recent years - does anyone have an explanation?

ITEM 14: ADJOURN 7:45