

Economic Development Committee
Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Present: Kristina Dousharm (Chair), Chris Klose (Secretary), Amanda Bodian, Dan Budd, Maarty Reilingh, Vanessa Shafer, Jacob Testa (members); Robert McKeon (Supervisor, Town of Red Hook), Ed Blundell (Mayor, Village of Red Hook), Kim McGrath (Red Hook Area Chamber of Commerce), Emily Sachar (IMBY)

Call to Order: With a quorum present, Chair Dousharm called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m.

Minutes: On a motion by Dr. Reilingh and second by Ms. Bodian, the Minutes of the Meeting of November 4, 2020 were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

- **Comprehensive Plan** – KD: Open up zoning to other businesses compatible with our small town character?

DB: Seems we should prepare wording for an updated plan, so how do we do it? Embracing tourism, for example.

KMcG: Key word is “tourism.” What does that mean and how would it work in revising the plan? Housing “tourists” is another issue.

AB: In a perfect world, tourism would include a conference center, serving people from elsewhere who come and go and spend their money locally.

DB: Draft language for the Town Board to help guide them in revising the plan, especially “tourism” definition and how to support it.

RMcK: Over last 20 years, we’ve discussed and spent tax dollars supporting local agriculture, such as Rose Hill Farm, and that has spurred tourism; language has not fostered tourism, *per se*, but it may not suit now and into the future; might make sense to strike a balance between ag and tourism, understanding we do not want sprawl; the Comp Plan should accommodate both;

KMcG: Given we haven’t until now, we have a hodge-podge, so we need to coordinate the plan to be forward-thinking; must avoid waves of empty storefronts;

RMcK: What’s missing and fill in the blank(s) is key because we have changed the zoning in recent years to foster growth; EDC should

Economic Development Committee
Minutes of 11-11-2020
Page Two

recommend what kinds of businesses we should have and what could be done to attract them, e.g; Short Term Rentals (STRs), which we currently do not regulate.

KD: (Sharing screen, quotes from current plan in re: definitions of small business viability, importance of tourism, agri-tourism); there are many businesses which are not allowed so we should look at those which are compatible, such as “maker” businesses (furniture, ceramics and other “light industrial” ones) because they create jobs...

(Power outage; rejoined in progress)

MR: Put a list of businesses together and look at what issues might help or hinder them vis a vis the long-term plan;

KMcG: Look at the businesses layer-by-layer to understand how they work, as per inside the villages, outside, etc., but tourism is what’s sustainable and we need to get on board fast;

DB: Lots of successful businesses have a vision and succeed on their own but today (in the pandemic) businesses need to welcome the everyday client as well as the occasional visitor; for example, TBudd’s is missing the normal afterschool trade because of the virus, so the EDC should help foster the overall business environment in any way possible;

VS: Let’s look at what we have already (KMcG’s list of businesses) and then evaluate what we can do vis a vis long range planning, including infrastructure (see “use table” in Town of Red Hook Zoning Code); is there a document setting out what we want to become?

KD: EDC members send your comments/thoughts/notes for compilation into a single reference document for strategic review;

- **Updates** – EB: look at reorganizing Comprehensive Plan, especially redoing RH is “not a tourist destination.” Cold weather coming in so concerned about Covid19 spread and what we can/should do to continue supporting local businesses; 6 pm Veterans Day/Delgado joining observance in Memorial Park (social distancing); haven’t gotten green light yet on the sewer; working to protect employees/need federal assistance;

**Economic Development Committee
Minutes of 11-11-202**

Page Three

DB: adding another layer of protection (mandatory masks inside!) to help TBudd's employees and the public stay safe; RH Responds doing very well with Thanksgiving preparations (focused fund raiser for the freezer, for example); working closely with Rhinebeck to coordinate efforts; prepping December schedule to determine what's needed, how many volunteers, etc; collaborating with Bard in re: tutoring for school children; food exchange working well; RHCS doing can and box drive as of Dec. 1;

KD: Holiday lights/decorations ongoing offline; KMcG's list of business participants to be distributed.

Next Meeting: 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 18, 2020 via Zoom.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: Christopher Klose, Secretary