

SALISBURY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 20, 2022 – 5:30PM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Ward Belcher, Kitty Kiefer, Janet Graaff, Tom Shachtman, David Maffucci and Robert Schaufelberger. Bruce McEver arrived later in the meeting. Absent: Richard Block.
2. Approval of the Agenda. So Moved by K. Kiefer, seconded by J. Graaff and unanimously Approved.
3. Approval of the Minutes of February 16, 2022. So Moved by T. Shachtman, seconded by R. Schaufelberger and Approved. J. Graaff abstained (she was not at the meeting).
Approval of the Minutes of March 16, 2022. J. Graaff Moved to Approve the Minutes of March 16, 2022, with the following corrections: Under Item #7, "...W. Belcher and J. Graaff talked about forming a subcommittee...." and "It was agreed that J. Graaff would pursue forming a working group that extends beyond the membership of this Committee." R. Schaufelberger seconded the Motion and it was unanimously Approved.
4. POCD update on what has been learned about residents' preferences.
J. Graaff indicated that 5 out of 6 of the SEDC issues had been addressed and the substance was covered. The results are on the Town website. She thanked R. Schaufelberger for sending email alerts and blasts about the POCD survey. She noted that the response rate was 23%, a good representation from voters. From her notes on the results, she made some observations:
 - "Why people want to live here" – the top response was "community, natural beauty, ambiance and town amenities." The bottom response was "having low property taxes." Many people indicated they would be willing to accept a small mill rate increase in taxes, based on what is important to them.
 - Priorities that were important to people included: getting high speed internet service; having affordable housing; and the re-vitalization of the village centers.

T. Shachtman looked over the data and expressed that he is not sure if the survey results are a good measure of what is important or the predictability of what actions will be taken by the town. He noted that the results have not been mentioned in the newspaper or promoted elsewhere. J. Graaff mentioned that the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) is still analyzing the results and working on the details of a plan for working with various groups, such as the SEDC. K. Kiefer mentioned that she had received an email from Bob Riva, PZC, regarding meeting with her about fiber optic (internet service); T. Shachtman will join her.

5. Village of Salisbury Development Concept Planning update.

J. Graaff talked about forming the subcommittee which will discuss this topic and that Carol Sadlon has been asked to join it. Ms. Sadlon has agreed to join the subcommittee and lead it, when it is formed. R. Schaufelberger will stand in for J. Graaff while she is traveling this summer. The subcommittee will include people beyond the SEDC and the project will be kept as broad as possible.

6. Development of town-owned agricultural property update.

T. Shachtman mentioned that the property on Race Track Road is too small for a farm demonstration project. Another possible project could be a “gateway” for farm products, maybe a farmers market. He will try to meet with some farmers in the area. This type of project would require some investment on the part of the town. K. Kiefer offered brief comments. W. Belcher noted that many agricultural projects are supported with government funding.

(At this time, the Committee recognized Carol Sadlon, who had joined the meeting. Ms. Sadlon introduced herself and talked about her background. She noted that W. Belcher, K. Kiefer and J. Graaff had welcomed her to help with subcommittee projects. She is looking forward to meeting with a lot of people, especially independent small businesses; she is excited to work with everyone to enhance what we already have. She is also looking forward to getting started on the project and welcomes thoughts from members. W. Belcher and R. Schaufelberger also have a few people in mind to be on this focused subcommittee.)

7. High Speed Internet update on Proposal to Selectmen to fund a Needs Assessment Survey, and other updates.

D. Maffucci gave a brief update on changes at NWConnect; they are trying to partner with either Frontier or Google Fiber. He noted that Goshen, Litchfield and Cornwall are served by another provider and may get fiber internet service before anyone else. He mentioned that Sharon has spearheaded the movement so far; their study was done. It would cost \$12-13M to wire to the town, requiring a .7 mill rate increase; it is now up to the Board of Finance to move on it. This Committee then had a lengthy discussion about whether or not to recommend a “needs assessment survey” or go directly to an engineering study; there were different opinions about the merits of pursuing either option. It was agreed that going to the Board of Selectmen right away to discuss what other towns are doing was the next step. W. Belcher and D. Maffucci will take the lead.

8. Public Comment – None

9. Actions and Assignments. J. Graaff asked that everyone be clear about assignments and follow up. W. Belcher is getting a price for SEDC business cards.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned by W. Belcher at 6:49pm.