

Notes from Spencer Economic Development Committee Meeting

Saturday, June 23, 2018 @ 8:30 am

Spencer Town Hall/Conference Room A

In attendance:

Mike Toomey (chair), Chris Woodbury, John Stevens, Tone Pepe, Sheila Cuddy (QV CDC), Paul Dell'Aquila (Town Planner)

c.t.o 8:30 a.m.

Sheila Cuddy, Executive Director of the Quabog Valley CDC (QV CDC) in Ware was the committee's guest this month. Sheila described the array of programs and services that QV CDC offers, including technical assistance and small business skills training. QV CDC was also a key player in the Three Rivers/TRACK program in Palmer, which is using arts and culture to promote neighborhood reinvestment. In Spencer, QV CDC has done some collaboration with Klem's and the library.

There was discussion about small business lending/incubation and the issue of succession, especially in the trades, and industry clusters. Sheila noted Small Business Development Center at Clark as an example for building relationships with the area universities.

There was much discussion amongst the members and Sheila about how to approach grants, social media, food initiatives, and collaboration with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. QV CDC has a "financial fitness club" for low/mod income and also has done "QuickBooks for farmers". Town should also look to USDA.

Also the perception vs. reality of Spencer was discussed and how town and QV CDC can collaborate going forward. Mike noted opportunities at cable access during dark times & bulletin board. Committee and Sheila agreed to keep in touch and communicate going forward.

EDC moved onto the regular business portion of the meeting.

Minutes of 6/2/18 meeting were approved 3-0. (Tony P was not present at 6/2 meeting)

Tony noted that beer festival wouldn't happen this year, but that planning would begin in the fall. There was discussion about having other ongoing repetitive event at Fairgrounds. Paul noted that he would be meeting with Discover Central Mass next week to show Fairgrounds and discuss possible events.

John gave an update on the Main Street flowers. Costs for baskets and watering in about \$3000. Chris raised a question about potentially using funds from FinCom's financial reserve. There was discussion that businesses should contribute as well. There was also discussion about banners in the fall.

Paul gave a brief Planner's update.

There was discussion about Press and P.R.

Committee should coordinate with Kevin Flanders at New Leader about quick pieces on flowers, park, new businesses, etc.

John would follow up on flowers & potential Friends of library events at Sugden Block.

John will get RV measurements from fairgrounds.

Mike was going to look into some media and advertising options.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am.