

**Notes from Spencer Economic Development Committee Meeting**  
**Saturday, July 28, 2018 @ 8:30 am**  
**Spencer Town Hall/Conference Room A**

In attendance:

Mike Toomey (chair), John Stevens, Tone Pepe, Paul Dell'Aquila (Town Planner)

c.t.o 8:39 a.m.

There was a brief recap of last month's meeting with Sheila Cuddy, Executive Director of the Quabog Valley CDC (QVDC). John noted that he would be remaining on the QVDC board. He was also going to assist them in setting up a small business ownership class in Spencer, likely at the Senior & Community Center on Maple St. Mike asked if there was an entrepreneurs club at Prouty H.S. Paul will also follow up with local universities for additional technical expertise.

There was some discussion about the Sugden Block going forward, given the lack of response to the RFP last month. Paul is in the process of reaching out to those who requested the RFP, but did not apply, to see what some of the reasons might be. Mike noted the importance of advertising more broadly to the commercial real estate sector and has had direct experience with this kind of advertising. Tony asked how we could target certain industry sectors. This led to general conversation about Spencer history and other marketing and p.r. efforts and potential funding for marketing consultants. Paul would try to find local examples. Tony noted we needed to do better branding, which Paul noted could be partially addressed by the Gateways technical assistance project about to be undertaken by CMRPC and also the Downtown design guidelines that will be created through the MDI grant we received earlier this year. There was some discussion about how this related to the PARP study done last year.

John noted to the group that per the TA and BOS, activities won't be expanded into the vacant retail space currently being used by Mexicali for equipment storage. There had been some discussion about having some pop-up programming there in conjunction with the current art space to enhance activity and the appeal of downtown. John pointed that out that there are historical walking tours of Spencer that operate out of the library.

John gave an update on the flowers. There had been some complaints/questions about the load factors on the poles and also the location of the planters in lieu of banners.

John also gave an update about recent conversations he had with Paul and local resident Randall Gardner, who is a leader of the WorcShop maker space on Stafford St. in Worcester. There seems to be a building mass of individuals involved with the creative economy in Spencer, so John and Paul will look to convene an initial meeting with some of those individuals in the early Fall to see what opportunities may exist to enhance economic development. John will also reach out to Massasoit Art Guild about their participation. Paul will begin to identify available spaces in town.

Paul gave an update about his meeting at the Fairgrounds with Bob Knight and members of Discover Central Mass. There are leads on several new events, including a potential balloon festival, in addition to

food truck and beer events discussed previously. Tony will be doing some field research at the Johnny Appleseed Festival in Leominster in August. There was additional discussion about events at the fairgrounds and downtown and the potential need to redefine the purview of the Celebrations Committee. Tony would look into this further.

#### Action Items

John will follow up on small business class through QVCDC; will reach out to Massasoit Art Guild about a Creative Economy meeting in the fall; continued follow up on flowers

Tony will attend Johnny Appleseed Beer Fest in Leominster in August to learn more info and look into redefining the purview of the Celebrations Committee

Mike was going to look into some media and advertising options for Sugden and other town properties; will also forward appropriate grants research info to John & Paul.

Paul will follow up with local universities about studies/interns/partnerships, etc.; will follow up with local communities who have hired marketing/branding consultant; will begin to update building/space inventory (inc. fmr. Cumberland Farms site); will set up "draft" EDC Facebook page; will follow up with previous inquiry about a potential new downtown development; will follow up with Hudson Beer Fest contacts.

Minutes of 6/23/18 meeting were approved 3-0.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 18.

Meeting adjourned at 10:34am.