

Notes from Spencer Economic Development Committee Meeting
Saturday, September 28, 2019 @ 8:30 am
Spencer Town Hall/Conference Room A

In attendance:

Shirley Shiver, Chris Woodbury, Mike Toomey, Paul Dell'Aquila (Town Planner), John Stevens

c.t.o 8:36 a.m.

Paul gave his Planner's Report.

Mike had a question about access to grant Watch relative to various opportunities. Paul said he would check with TA's office.

There was some discussion about decommissioning surety for solar projects. Chris asked whether or not land owners could be made the responsible party. Shirley noted that perhaps the Planning Board should have a workshop about this. Mike asked about what lenders require from homeowners on residential installations. Paul noted the required Interconnection Agreement between NGrid and developers on large commercial arrays.

John reported that the Spencer Street pARTy was a success and helped push us along in our thinking about revitalizing downtown. We had contributions from vendors and fostered more relationships with businesses.

There was some discussion about the meeting with Mass Development & MDI on Sept. 23. John noted MDI/MD's emphasis on community involvement and noted that we need to ID people with energy to participate. Idea of starting small with a Downtown Merchants' Association to ID active merchants to lead...not just Town/EDC.

There was general discussion about potential approaches and models for Downtown management & promotion.

John noted the work being done by Cheryl & Mary Baker Wood at the library...idea of a discussion/slide show to stimulate ideas.

Shirley noted previous studies (inc. Cecil Group) that noted Spencer's regional role.

Mike noted that ED shouldn't just be about Downtown, but that we have limited industrial/commercial areas. Mike also noted the need for a 501(c)3 for many grants.

Mike noted the transformation of Marlboro and the role of restaurants. Chris noted Kaizen in Sturbridge isn't in a big building but is a draw.

Shirley noted the connection between weddings and hotels.

Mike asked about a survey to determine needs; Chris and Paul noted previous efforts.

Paul shared a recent Discover Central Mass “Scenic Drive” as a model for Spencer and noted previous discussions.

Paul gave a brief update on Downtown Parking study being done by Stantec through MDI. Mike noted need for signage.

John reemphasized buy-in from merchants, esp. after Street pARTy & Design Guidelines

New Business

Paul shared some recent reports on TIFs.

Shirley noted coordination needed with Solar Bylaw Review Committee

Mike suggested better coordination with Parks & State; signage for Depot Trail & possible camping/camper events at the Fairgrounds, e.g.

Next meeting: tentatively set for October 26

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Shirley, second by Chris. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 pm.

Notes compiled and submitted by Paul Dell’Aquila