

Town of Shaftsbury
Economic Development Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 19, 2023
In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Martha Cornwell called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. Also present were committee members Rick Bennett and Marita Cockburn, and town administrator David Kiernan.

2. Conflict of Interest

No one expressed a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

There were no minutes to discuss.

4. BCRC/Planning Grant Update

Mr. Kiernan said the grant-writing process is almost done. It is a very popular grant so competition will be high, but the Town's application checks off many of the items which are high priority for the State. Ms. Cornwell said the grant would fund the BCRC's assistance. A major part of the project will be a commercial sites assessment. She said she hoped a big push could be made to make better use of the Bernstein space on Rt. 67E.

5. Cole Hall / Town Green Update

Ms. Cornwell said a contract has been signed with Goldstone Architects. They are working now on concept development. It is hoped that the preliminary site plan – mostly a set of footprints - will be ready by early January. Ms. Cornwell noted that funding to assess the feasibility of community sewer has been received.

Mr. Kiernan reported he is retiring in January 2024. Ms. Cornwell said the Select Board hopes to keep him on as a consultant for the many projects he is working on.

6. Fall seasonal event –Town Green

The event will be a simple ribbon cutting ceremony held on Sunday November 12, 10a-11a. Ms. Cornwell asked for thoughts. Speeches. Huge scissors or symbolic shovels. Ms. Cockburn will reach out to Mike Alban of the Bennington Banner to ask for coverage. Mr. Bennett suggested a prepared speech that will emphasize community input and community financial support. Mr. Bennett volunteered to try to write a speech. Ms. Cornwell suggested as topics: ongoing process starting with ARPA survey; led to creation of EDC; work with lots of partners; a place for the town to come; to be built in phases, e.g. gazebo first, community center later; fundraising could take any number of forms. All committee members will comment on the draft speech. Mr. Bennett referenced a presentation at a conference about a post and beam structure for which pegs were "purchased" and the donor pounded the peg in. Another version is buying a personalized brick. He said he thought the garden club should be involved with the design of the new Vet's garden. At Ms. Cockburn's suggestion, Mr. Kiernan will look into bringing in a small construction vehicle. Ms. Cornwell suggested mums and/or cornstalks. Or pumpkins.

Suggestions were made to invite BCRC and the owner of the Country Store as well as the general public. All agreed to offer cider and cider donuts. Mr. Bennett will make several dozen cupcakes. Ms. Cornwell will get the word out via social media, Vt New Guide, and others. Folks will look into bringing pop up tents if needed. No music will be sought for the event. No Jenga event will be held.

To dos:

- Ms. Cockburn will reach out to Mike Albans
- Mr. Bennett will draft a speech
- All will review it
- Ms. Cornwell will look into donuts and cider
- Mr. Bennett will make cupcakes
- Mr. Kiernan will get a small excavator
- Ms. Cockburn will bring in pumpkins
- Ms. Cornwell will find ribbon and scissors
- Ms. Cornwell will ask Ms. Bacchi for help with outreach

There will be no other EDC meetings until after the holidays.

Mr. Bennett reported he'd reached out to Bebe Bullock of Arlington Commons, who said she'd be glad to meet with them. He suggested that he and Ms. Cornwell attend one of their meetings.

Ms. Cornwell asked Ms. Cockburn if she could ask Sheri Miller to send in a letter of interest re serving on the EDC.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Bennett moved to adjourn at 3:50 p. Ms. Cockburn seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.