

## 4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

### MEMBER TOWN MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 14, 2020

2:00pm – 3:00pm

#### **Welcome –**

Eric Trott welcomed the attendees to the kick off meeting between the 4 towns who have worked together to prepare the 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Plan.

#### **Introductions –**

Each attendee introduced themselves and offered some reflections on the Plan.

Eric Trott – Coventry - Is excited about the work that has been done cooperatively between the 4 towns and the consultant to prepare the Plan and believes it is a very viable template for measurable and impactful tasks to support the towns. Although the pandemic struck at the end of the preparation of the Plan, it is believed that the Plan is even more relevant at this time and many initiatives can be moved forward.

Mike Rosen – Tolland – Is enthusiastic about the Plan and its potential impacts on regional economic development. It provides us with additional strength as we are more attractive together in encouraging the region as a destination and focus. The key with this Plan, when compared to other similar ones, is the implementation matrix.

Todd Longo – Tolland – Believes the Plan is a unique opportunity for the region to market the different assets and play on our strengths.

Jim Hutton – Tolland – Believes that the Plan creates a great place to continue the cooperative energy and work that has been built over the past year.

Ryan Hannigan – Tolland - Is excited about the Plan and looks forward to working on it. Believes it's important to have business representation in the group that is implementing the Plan.

Josh Kelly – Bolton – Has discussed the Plan with the Bolton Selectpersons and appreciates that the Plan is action oriented in its focus.

Patrice Carson – Bolton – Is looking forward to keep the momentum going with the Plan. Appreciates the compartmentalization of the actions. Believes that pieces can be added as the Plan moves forward and that feedback from stakeholders will be important. Hopes we can avoid 'Plan Fatigue' with the implementation tasks.

Kyleen Mike – Bolton – Is excited to help with the Plan implementation. Has had a great experience working with Coventry Parks and Recreation recently.

Toni Moran – Mansfield – Is glad Mansfield was able to be part of the effort. Reported that a new Town Manager has been hired who will be involved with next steps. Mentioned that a marketing brochure is being prepared at this time which can contribute to the work to being done.

Cynthia VanZelm – Mansfield – Mentioned the relevance to the recently unveiled State of CT campaign ‘CampusCT’ to help maintain recently graduated college students in the state. The Plan directly relates to that effort. Discussed the importance of recreation and the natural beauty of the towns being emphasized with the Plan.

Cara – UCONN – Discussed UCONN’s perspective and the importance of having the ability to leverage regional activities during the university’s ‘off season’.

Candice Corcione – Tolland County Chamber of Commerce – Is excited to participate in the effort. Discussed the Chamber’s Economic Development Committee being aware of the progress of the Plan.

#### **Memorandum of Understanding –**

The reps from the 4 towns mentioned that the MOU appears to be in good order. The matter of residents vs. town officials was discussed.

Meeting minutes and agendas will need to be posted by each town.

The draft will be finalized and forwarded to the elected bodies of each town for adoption.

#### **Implementation Matrix –**

A discussion occurred about the types of priorities that could be focused on initially. Parks, recreation, outdoor activities have been very relevant over the past few months. This priority could be built on moving forward.

Business development is another important focus area.

The development of a calendar of events that is shared between the 4 towns and their respective websites and social media is another viable priority.

A discussion occurred regarding Coventry’s work on the ‘06238’ town calendar platform.

Mansfield has recently hired a communications specialist that may be able to contribute to the calendar concept.

Cara and Cynthia mentioned the importance of sharing all that occurs at UCONN throughout the year.

An inventory of regional assets is another priority for year 1 – including agricultural, recreation, cultural, and business examples.

A landing webpage on each town website that links to a collective regional one would be desirable.

A discussion occurred about the development and use of a 'brand' or 'campaign' for the region was part of the Plan that did not get fully executed. This will need to be discussed further.

Candice from the Tolland Chamber mentioned that each town is a Chamber member and its website could serve as a good clearinghouse of the events on a shared calendar for the region.

**Next meeting date, time, agenda items –**

A day during the week of November 16 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

Finalizing the MOU and considering initial tasks will be discussed at the next meeting.