

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEMBER TOWN TEAM MEETING NOTES

January 13, 2021 – via Zoom

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Welcome –

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting between the 4 towns who have worked together to prepare the 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Plan. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

Steering Committee Officers –

The following individuals have been appointed as members:

: Bolton – Josh Kelly, Sandra Pierog, Patrice Carson

: Coventry – pending – Eric Trott, Wendy Rubin, and Erica Pagliuco continue as staff representatives

: Mansfield – Ryan Aylesworth, Cynthia VanZelm, Cara Workman

: Tolland – Mike Rosen, Caitlin Gordon, Jim Hutton

Priority Action Item – 4 Town Calendar:

The Committee continues to consider options for a 4 Town calendar that is easily implemented, cost effective, and connects with existing websites, social media and other platforms. Previously, Google calendar and Microsoft 365 were viewed as possible options to further consider. Bolton is in the process of evaluating a new website which needs to be considered for compatibility as well as the other towns.

Wendy Rubin provided an overview of the 'UpTo' app '06238' community event calendar experience that she and other Coventry departments were involved with a few years ago. The app is free, very user friendly, and provides an engaging interface for the user. The staff had prepared posting protocols, user rules, as well as mechanisms to enable it to be a fundraising effort. The subscription fee was only \$10 per month.

Some comments regarding the potential of requiring an app versus using a link to a Town website and potential impediments were discussed.

Mansfield is currently examining a community calendar. Cynthia will look into what the status of the situation is and report to the Committee at the next meeting.

Eric will share the details with the Committee on 06238 that were provided by Wendy. The protocols and user rules can be considered as a starting point for whatever option is pursued.

Priority Action Item - Asset inventory:

Each town has begun inputting examples of significant assets in a document that can be used as a clearinghouse for more information on the inventory, as well as project stakeholder names. Copies of existing marketing resources and other materials that showcases the region's assets can be collected as well.

The goal with the theme-based asset inventory is to assist in creating relevant action items for a committee to carry out. Such as concepts for further resources and information that can be used to attract local citizens and visitors to connect with the assets in the region.

Committee members shared creative ideas such as a regional scavenger hunt, connective tour ideas with links to businesses and destinations which can be shared in a map resource. It was suggested that since this is a regional effort, CRCOG may be able to assist since they serve as the host of the town's GIS platform.

Other ideas were discussed such as local currency opportunities where money spent in the region can be reinvested in the region with the support of local businesses. An example in western Massachusetts called 'Berkshares' was mentioned. The Town of Tolland has been considering a similar venture.

4 Town 'campaign' creation with Nichols College:

Tim Liptrap reported that the project will likely be able to be initiated in February. The situation with Nichols College and other institutions Tim could work with has been challenging due to the pandemic. There has been a positive response by the entities that Tim has communicated with on the project thus far. A college network – campaign competition is envisioned that will likely provide viable options to consider.

Team stakeholder and Committee list:

A tab can be added to the Google document that includes stakeholder information for the member towns.

Next steps:

The following are the next steps that will occur up to the scheduled meeting next month: continue asset inventory, continue consideration of event calendar, update Google document with relevant information.

Other business:

Eric shared details about the 8 Mile River Wind and Scenic Watershed 'Wander our Watershed' campaign. A very attractive and informative map resource that provides details on open space, hiking trail and preserved lands in the watershed was produced to showcase all of the special locations in the region. This can serve as a template for the 4 Town effort, since there are many

opportunities for outdoor recreation in the region. Copies of the information will be shared with the Committee.

Next meeting date, time, agenda items -

A day during the week of February 8 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

Agenda items that were on the January agenda will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment –

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.