

Charlemont Planning Board  
Economic Development Roundtable  
Saturday, April 30, 2011  
Jerry Pratt's House

Minutes

The Planning Board has received technical assistance from the COG to update the economic development section of the 2004 Master Plan. In this context the Board had called for a first public meeting of all interested citizens to discuss how to best invigorate the downtown economy and to stimulate better coordination among businesses, landowners, residents and farmers. The meeting had been properly posted with the attached agenda and the space was handicapped accessible. People brought food for a sort of picnic.

24 people attended including Planning Board members Gisela Walker, Jerry Pratt, Trevor Mackie and Kathy Eichholz.

Pratt opened the meeting at 5.30 pm. He outlined the purpose of the meeting, reminded the audience of the beauty and resources of the town and encouraged people to think about how to work together for the benefit of the town as a whole.

Walker explained the background of the agreement with the COG to update the economic development section of the Master Plan. This will be done by the end of this calendar year. After that time - at the latest - this initiative would no longer be guided by the Planning Board but would have to find its own form of organization.

In a general discussion participants brought up many good ideas and raised questions that centered around how to keep visitors in town, how to inform them about what is available in town through signs, fliers, directories, maps, and/or websites; the need for better communication within town was brought up, and the need for targeted attraction of businesses into town.

Walker then went over the recommendations for economic development from the old Master Plan and additional discussion arose over some of those items. Ms. Rouleau told about earlier town funding for façade renovations, Mr. Carcio reported on the expectations of the traffic calming committee,

someone mentioned the need to highlight the covered bridge and fair grounds, Mr. Shields spoke of the plan to rehabilitate the wishing well at the Indian monument in cooperation with the Native American Council (I may have got this wrong), Mr. Lessels mentioned plans for new mountain bike trails, Ms. Handsacker brought up a less well known motivation for tourism: genealogical research that brings people back to old hometowns, museums and cemeteries; there was a call for a listing of available commercial spaces, and Mr. Coli explained why a few years ago the Tourist Information Center did not happen. Mr. Shields also pointed out that in 4 years Charlemont will celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Start planning!!!

The next meeting will take place on **June 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm; the Warfield House** kindly offered its premises as meeting location. The group decided to rotate meeting sites. The meeting will focus on the research done by the COG staff and on setting priorities for economic goals.

Mr. Pratt encouraged everyone to help get the word out.

There was discussion about how to communicate in the meantime with either email lists or with a wiki or via the town website. Ms. Porter volunteered her time should we decide to go with a wiki. There was some question about how those media relate to the OML as long as this effort is under the auspices of the Planning Board. Walker agreed to look into this.

Around 7.15pm the meeting drew to a close.

Respectfully submitted by  
Gisela Walker,  
Chair of the Planning Board

attached: agenda, economic recommendations, sign up sheet copy