

## 4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

### MEMBER TOWN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

February 10, 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.

#### **Steering Committee Officers –**

The following individuals have been appointed as members:

: Bolton – Josh Kelly, Sandra Pierog, Patrice Carson

: Coventry – pending Town Council appointment – Eric Trott, Wendy Rubin, Erica Pagliuco continue as staff representatives

: Mansfield – Ryan Aylesworth, Cynthia VanZelm, Cara Workman

: Tolland – Mike Rosen, Caitlin Gordon, Jim Hutton

The meeting kicked off with a discussion on ways of furthering efforts with the projects that have been agreed upon as initial priorities by the Committee. Specifically, the 4 Town calendar, open space map/brochure, and expanding the benefit of the asset inventory. One way of expanding the benefit of the asset inventory is to develop a variety of regional tours in the 4 towns that highlight the businesses and other destinations (assets) which can be part of a larger marketing effort. The open space assets can be identified in the 4 towns and incorporated into a regional map/brochure that identifies all the properties and provides specific information about them. This would be similar to the resource that was developed by the entities associated with the 8 Mile River Watershed planning efforts.

Those in attendance volunteered to be part of the subcommittees and/or suggested other individuals who could participate as well. A robust list of members was created to serve on the following subcommittees: 4 Town event calendar, open space map/brochure, regional destination tour guide, regional currency, and Nichols College student logo competition.

The 4 Town team staff will work together to develop the master list of participants and their contact information so that the subcommittees can begin meeting before the next Steering Committee meeting. These details will be shared with all involved.

#### **4 Town 'campaign' creation with Nichols College:**

Tim Liptrap gave a report. He has been reaching out to his peers at other colleges to discuss the project and determine interest. The goal is to kick off the student competition project on March 15, but would like to meet with Staff before the launch to get all the details. Extra credit is typically earned for the work completed by the student. In order to create more motivation for the students, we may need to be able to offer an opportunity for ongoing work/internship. Judges representing the 4 Towns will need to be available to assist in the evaluation of the work. More details will be provided as we approach the launch date.

#### **Regional currency:**

The Town of Tolland Staff and EDC have been discussing the potential of creating a local currency. A member of the Tolland EDC and Mike Rosen spoke on the topic and some of the research that had been done about other locations that have inspired such a project. The city of Berlin, CT; UCONN's Husky Bucks; and western Massachusetts with Berkshares are examples that were discussed. The local currency can be exchanged at a discount and spent at local businesses. This could be a unique business support and regional marketing activity that could be combined with the regional tourism destination guide. Also, the likelihood of success for this project is increased due to the fact that all four towns are participating.

There are a number of important variables that need to be considered with the project, such as what currency medium is preferred. This is particularly important due to COVID. The exchange rate needs to be developed as well as the relationships with banks for the exchange of the funds. Local vs. franchise businesses need to be considered.

#### **Next steps:**

The committee member participants and contact information will be compiled. The various committees will attempt to meet before the next Steering Committee meeting to take initial steps with the projects and report at the next Steering Committee meeting.

#### **Other business:**

None.

#### **Next meeting date, time, agenda items -**

A day during the week of March 15 will be selected and shared with the attendees.

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

#### **Adjournment –**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.