

## 4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

### MEMBER TOWN TEAM MEETING NOTES

DECEMBER 16, 2020 – via Zoom

2:00pm – 3:00pm

#### **Welcome –**

Meeting 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.

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

The MOU has been adopted by the governing bodies of each town.

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

The following individuals have been appointed as members:

: Bolton – pending – Josh Kelly, Kyleen Mike, and Patrice Carson continue as staff representatives

: 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

#### **Campaign/slogan/identification of 4 Town Vitality Plan –**

Eric introduced Tim Liptrap, who is a member of the Coventry Economic Development Commission and is a Professor at Nichols College. Tim introduced himself and gave a brief indication of his work and educational experience relative to branding and marketing.

Each town gave an indication of where they stand on branding efforts:

Bolton – Is in the process of identifying a municipal brand. Their town logo has served in that function over the years.

Mansfield – Two years ago a positioning plan and tagline was prepared for the Town – ‘Your Place to Grow’. The Downtown Partnership has a separate brand of ‘Eat – Explore – Enjoy’.

Tolland – Has not pursued a branding effort.

Coventry – Has not pursued a branding effort. The Town has two logos that it has used for various purposes - the Nathan Hale logo and a graphic that was prepared for the Police Department several years ago. The Land Use Office also has a unique logo.

A brief review was provided on the 'campaign' that was part of the AdvanceCT work. Each town agreed that the process was useful, but did not illicit anything that everyone could agree on.

Tim indicated that he would be willing to create a case study/contest with Nichols College students he works with and potentially others to build a campaign/tag line/logo that reflects the consistent themes between the 4 towns. Mock ups will be provided during the next college semester which starts in January with results provided by the end of the semester. Those in attendance were very appreciative of this offer of assistance and were in full agreement to pursue it.

Tim also provided some details on a new department/course of study that is being created at Nichols College relative to 'digital nomads'. The program will be supporting and building employees in the digital workplace.

#### **Implementation matrix – consider priorities –**

##### 4 Town event calendar

Numerous ideas were discussed at the previous meetings for which action items should be pursued as a priority project. The three most viable candidates that have been agreed upon are: the development of a logo/campaign which is in progress with the assistance of Tim Liptrap and Nichols College, the creation of 4 town event calendar platform, and preparing asset inventories of each of the member towns.

Olivia, the Coventry Town Manager's intern, researched options of possible event calendar platforms, which includes: Microsoft 365, Google Calendar, iCalendar. Details on her research were shared and briefly discussed.

Diane from the Windham Chamber provided some insight on her experience with an event calendar as well as SECTOR's (Southeastern CT Council of Governments) shared calendar, which is a Wordpress platform.

There are many considerations that need to be carefully evaluated with shared calendars, such as: posting policies, management, and method of conveying materials.

Wendy Rubin, Coventry Parks and Recreation Director, shared her experience with the development of a shared calendar system called '06238'. She indicated that it was a great effort, but the platform did not reach the popularity and usage that was anticipated, largely due to the fact that it was not very mobile-friendly.

It was agreed to further consider the Google and Microsoft platforms.

## Asset inventory

The development of an asset inventory was viewed as another viable option for a priority project. This could be a relatively simple task for each town. It will also serve as an important piece in the future as efforts and are underway to market the region in a collaborative fashion. The information that would be incorporated into the asset inventory should be readily available from existing resources such as Plans of Conservation and Development, business directories, Town marketing, and other informational resources.

The development of a Google shared document to collect the resources submitted by each town was viewed as the best way to manage the information. In the meantime, each town was asked to begin preparing simple lists of resources that could be included with the inventory.

### **Next steps –**

The following are the next steps that will occur up to the scheduled meeting next month: team members will continue to find interested stakeholders to invite to the group, the campaign development project will begin to be planned by Tim Liptrap, and simple lists of asset inventory items will be prepared by each town.

### **Other business –**

None.

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

A day during the week of January 11 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

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

### **Adjournment –**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.