

## **Charlemont Economic Development Roundtable/Initiative**

### **Draft Minutes of the meeting on June 14, 2011 at Berkshire East**

The meeting had been properly posted in town hall, on the town website, on the outdoor bulletin board and by email and public listserv.

Present: Gisela Walker, Chair, Planning Board, Jerry Pratt, Planning Board, Win Healy, Bd of Selectmen, Neal Lear, Conserv. Commission, Ken Hall, Fire Chief and 7 members of the public as listed on the sign in sheet.

After introductions everyone took some time to check off their 3 or 4 top choices from the economic development action recommendations of the past Master Plans. It was suggested to use the Survey Monkey tool to get as many votes from the public and local officials as possible before the end of the month. The COG staff will then develop these a bit further towards implementation.

Members then presented their pet projects for the Initiative to focus on next. Some of those were rather immediate and short term, some take a more long term approach.

- Encourage local businesses to be visible at Yankee Doodle Day 7/22.
- Create a brochure(s) to promote events in town and businesses
- Protect our scenic land more permanently from development
- Improve communication in town with newspaper/internet/fliers
- Create a series of public events to even out the seasonal peaks
- Be targeted about attracting businesses into town that we need
- Get more landowners willing to open their land to trails
- Re-instate the train from Boston for scenic fall tours and skiing

In the following discussion we realized that among ourselves we did not even know of upcoming events such as Yankee Doodle Day, Riverfest, Foodfest, Chili Cookout, Reggae Fest, the Charlemont Forum Lecture series etc.

Ideas abounded about possible new events in more off-season times to create a more steady flow of visitors and customers.

What is needed then to further those is coordination, communication and promotion.

In terms of **coordination** people felt that right now the regular meetings of this group would provided need coordination. For larger, more complex events hired coordination may be necessary down the line.

Both Zoar Outdoor and Berkshire East have event plans in the pipeline for which they will take responsibility and this group can help create links to the town.

For **communication** we are at this point best off with using the email listserve. Please send in your comments anytime for feedback from others.

In terms of **promotion** the discussions ended with the charge to develop a relatively simple, fast brochure/flier/internet presence for the events lined up for this year and to work more long term on a good looking promotional paper for the town businesses and events and resources.

Cheryl Handsacker volunteered to provide the group (and anyone who wants to join) with a public calendar of upcoming events in town as a start. This will be reviewed at the **next meeting - set for Wednesday, July 6, 2011 at the Zoar Outdoors.**

**Respectfully submitted by Gisela Walker**

**PS** I have since met with Mary Villon, Exec Director of the SFIs Area Bus. Assoc. They are eager to expand more into surrounding towns, happy to help us where they can; she was very informed about what is going on in Charlemont and would be willing to list our events in their events calendar. She warned that Gov. Patrick has said he would veto tourism MOTT money in the budget for this year so we may need to do things on the cheap this year. She encouraged all Charlemonsters to use the Village Visitor Center to promote their stuff.

6/15/2011 9:14 PM

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