

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2014**

PRESENT: Bernie Krasnoff
Rob Megnin
Gerrie Russell

ALSO PRESENT: Seth Webb, Town Manager
Amy Morrison, Events Coordinator

PUBLIC PRESENT: Tracy Taylor, Jeanne Karlhuber, Chris Coughlin, Chris Bianchi

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from 7/14
3. Citizen Input
4. Chamber Report
5. Resort Report
6. Town Report
7. Options Tax reform
8. Commissioner's Concerns
9. Date for Next Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 PM.

A motion to approve the minutes of 7/14/14 was made by Rob Megnin and seconded by Gerrie Russell.

CHAMBER UPDATE: (Amy Morrison)

The Killington Wine Festival was a great success with more in attendance than last year. We are expanding the Regional Merchant Pass Program. Tomorrow, August 12th is the Winter in August event being held in Rutland. Parking has not been a problem at the Chamber location although the construction in progress is causing drivers to be more cautious.

RESORT UPDATE: (Rob Megnin)

Good weather has helped attendance at the 2014 “ It's Cooler In The Mountain” concert series. Summer business is up 30% from last year while mountain biking is up 80% over last year. The planned operations at Snowshed are in the beginning stages. Summer Action camps have started. The Soaring Eagle zip line is on schedule to open in September. Gravity Logic will be here in the fall for two weeks to flag new mountain bike trails including a jump rail. In the fall there are several large weddings scheduled along with the Beer Fest. The Sparton Race is sold out.

TOWN REPORT: (Seth Webb)

The Downhill Throwdown was held last weekend with 100 participants. It generated quite a lot of publicity including photos in various newspapers and is coming back next year. A proposed plan is to do a combination event with Killington and Burke Mountain. The Killington Classic – Ameritrade will

have Yamaha providing demo rides, which is a new feature this year. Because of this event Cooler in the Mountains is being extended one week. The Hay Festival starts in September with participation down a little from last year. Bidding is out for new wayfinding signs. PARK and RIDE construction has begun with a completion date in early September. At this time the relocation of several telephone poles is the focus of attention. Killington Road and West Hill Road reconstruction should be completed within two weeks. The agreement with the US Forest Service regarding new mountain biking trails is up for public comment until the 15th of August. Calls for property tax reform are being heard in small towns across the state and larger populated areas are joining the call for reform to be voted on in the next legislative session. Ken Lee, one of our selectmen, and Walter Findeisen will be attending a statewide conference on this subject on Thursday, August 14th. The chile cookoff was a success again this year as have been the summer concerts on River Road. Golf course revenues are lower than at this time last year.

OPTION TAX REFORM:

In answer to the question by Gerrie Russell if any more meetings were to be held, Rob Megin noted two more meetings are scheduled, one a community meeting similar to the last one held in June and another between the Chamber and the Resort which is actually the Chamber's annual meeting. The dates are not in place but they will obviously be scheduled before election day. Seth Webb's comments reflected the fact that we all want more tourists but raising property taxes is not the most viable option and in a perfect world the town, the Chamber and the Resort would all work together. The concept of A Killington Pico Area Association would strengthen all three entities...the town, the chamber and the resort...and would remove some costs from the town budget. Gerrie Russell noted the present condition of the upper part of Killington road, along with not cutting down the weeds in areas, plus not maintaining areas that were once flower beds, then dirt, then rocks with weeds does not inspire public confidence in the Resort following through with proposed plans. She also mentioned that some are concerned with the situation the parent company is involved in back in Utah. Bernie Krasnoff questioned the timeline for KPAA and added he thought there might be consideration of two members from the town on the Board of Directors. Bernie also felt that if we, as a commission, were going to support this endeavor, there should be some plan of action in place to publicize our support and a way to advocate for it's implementation. It was decided that Seth would put together a written recommendation to present to the Selectboard and a special meeting should be held to discuss and vote on same. August 25th at 3:30 PM was the selected date.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chris Bianchi: The first of three comments was regarding the condition of Killington Road and he noted this was brought up at the Selectboard Meeting. Since that section of the road is situated between the town section of said road and East Mountain Road, who is responsible for any liability. His second point was that we need to pay attention to any necessary background work that must take place before an election can be held. There would be an important time line that would have to be followed. The third point was that he supports a formal resolution to be presented to the selectboard and hopefully, that would have 100% support among commission members.

Jeanne Karlhuber: We all want action that will result in lower taxes. From a business point of view we do not want to sacrifice any progress that has already been accomplished. Inefficient planning for this process might signify an act of desperation. The lack of proper planning and presentation might result in more apprehension. She also mentioned concerns about the court proceedings in Utah that the parent company is involved in.

The next meeting is Monday, August 25th at 3:30 PM. This is a special meeting called for the purpose of discussing the options tax resolution to be presented to the selectboard.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

First Draft
Respectfully Submitted
Gerrie Russell