

Town of Concord
Economic Vitality Committee Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2022

Present: Jennifer Schunemann, Chair, Dawn Rennert, Steven Verrill, Marie Foley, Remon Karian, Mark Martines, Jennifer McGonigle, Cato Anderson and Jan Turnquist
Staff: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management, Beth Williams, Tourism Manager, Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner and Erin Stevens, Public Information Officer
Others: Ellen Quackenbush

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 P.M.

THE CONCORD TROLLEY

Erin Stevens gave a presentation regarding The Concord Trolley Pilot Program that is currently being developed. This would involve a trolley that would move around Concord to different historic locations in town. This trolley would allow passengers to embark and disembark at various locations. It would operate from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. 7 days a week until the end of October. It would be free to passengers or operate with a small fee being paid. It would be ADA Compliant and would address an issue with multimodal transportation in Concord. It is very difficult to get to historic locations without a mode of transportation so this would address that issue. The Town of Concord is working with the Town's of Lincoln and Lexington to obtain a FLAP Grant which is a Federal Land Access Grant to expand accessibility to historic areas in towns. It is expected that Concord may see upwards of 200,000 visitors in 2026 for REV 250. It is important that we expand transportation in order to move visitors around town more easily.

Ms. Stevens presented a Power Point Presentation developed by her, Ms. Rasmussen, Ms. Hughes and Ms. Williams, to outline what the trolley would look like and what stops would be included on its daily trips. There are stops in both Concord and West Concord including both train stations. The trolley would contribute to the Economic Development of the Town as well as Equity and Diversity in Tourism as not everyone has a vehicle with which to move around town. Many tourists will come on the train and then have no way of moving from place to place. Many groups in Town are in favor of this PILOT Program including:

Concord Business Partnership
Chamber of Commerce
Transportation Advisory Committee
Concord Business Owners

Ms. Stevens stated they have received bids for the Trolley and she is waiting for funding to award the bid. Tourism is vital to Concord and there is a lot of support for this idea.

Ms. Turnquist stated that the impact of people getting around town is important to Concord. Some people travel from other parts of the country just to see Orchard House and there is no way to get there from the train. She has heard from visitors that the Liberty Ride from Lexington is nice but only stops at the North Bridge in Concord. It is more focused on the Lexington tourist sites.

Ms. Stevens stated that the goal is to keep the Trolley Route short so people won't be on it for long periods of time. We will do a PILOT Program with the Trolley before REV 250.

Ms. Schunemann stated that we should vote on whether we are in favor of a PILOT Program for the Trolley and then work out the details later.

Mr. Verrill suggested that the Trolley could meet the train in Concord and West Concord and take people back to those locations as well as meet up with the Liberty Ride.

Ms. Williams stated that all aspects are being explored concerning the route the Trolley will take. Tickets may be purchased on the website or at the Visitor's Center. Also, during the PILOT program they will be surveying riders to see their response to the new way to get around Concord. This Trolley could also be used to move employees around Concord. She is also speaking with Emerson Hospital if it could be used to take riders to appointments. She stated that retailers are very excited about the PILOT program.

Mr. Martines asked the committee if they should recommend using ARPA Funds to fund the Trolley. Ms. Schunemann stated that the Select Board is not asking us to do that.

Mr. Karian stated that it is important to connect this Trolley to Lexington but this should be just transportation and not a guided tour.

Ms. Quackenbush asked that the survey questions be posted online as it would be great to know where people are coming from to Concord. She also asked if there would be a stop at Walden Pond as she believed that is a priority destination.

Ms. Hughes stated there is an internal coordination problem with Walden Pond as they only allow a certain number of visitors per day. This idea needs more coordination with the DCR and to date that has not been possible.

Ms. Schunemann recommended the Committee Vote on the following language to send to the Select Board:

The Economic Vitality Committee supports the PILOT Program for The Concord Trolley and recommends exploring using ARPA funds to cover the cost.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Rennart and seconded by Ms. Foley it was **VOTED**, unanimously, to support the PILOT Program for The Concord Trolley and recommend exploring using ARPA funds to cover the cost.

Ms. Foley– Aye
Ms. Williams – Aye
Mr. Anderson - Aye
Mr. Verrill - Aye
Ms. Rennert - Aye
Mr. Martines - Aye
Ms. McGonigle - Aye
Ms. Turnquist - Aye
Mr. Karian - Aye
Ms. Schunemann - Aye

ECONOMIC VITALITY OFFICER

Mr. Martines gave an update on the letter he is drafting, for the committee, to send to the Select Board outlining the need for an Economic Vitality Officer in Concord. He outlined in the draft that the primary mission of the officer would be for retail and tourism sustainability. This Liaison should be proactive instead of reactive. He hopes that this position will be featured in the FY 2024 budget. He also believes that this committee should be involved in the hiring of key positions in Town including, Assistant Town Manager, Director of Board of Health, Director of Planning and Land Management and the Town Manager.

The committee indicated that this person should be actively involved in recruiting new businesses to come to town. They need to be a mix of business and public relations face for the town. They also need to aide in communication between business owners and town staff.

Mr. Martines would like the letter to include two topics, the need for an Economic Vitality Officer in Concord and the need for the business community to be involved in the hiring of key positions.

Mr. Martines will send the proposed letter to the committee and then if they have any comments they can send them back to him only. It is important that the committee does not discuss this letter outside of an Open Meeting.

The various Town Departments will start assembling their budget items in the Fall of 2022, for FY 2024, so it is important to get this letter to the Select Board in the Fall.

WELCOME TO CONCORD BUSINESS MANUAL

The committee discussed putting together a Welcome to Concord Business Manual for prospective businesses owners to town. It was questioned whether or not this is something we should be doing. Ms. Rasmussen asked what the committee was looking for in a manual. We already have manuals including one on Permitting Guidelines and one for opening a Restaurant,

on the Town's website. She asked the committee to send her examples of what they would like to see on the website. If they have examples from other towns she would like to see them. Ms. Schunemann suggested that the committee brainstorm ideas at the next meeting of what they would like to see in a manual. Mr. Verrill will try to speak with John Minty, Retired Building Inspector, to see if he has any ideas on what would help potential business owners coming into town.

Ms. Williams stated there is a business listing page on the Town's Website with over 300 businesses listed. Her new Assistant will be tasked with updating that list.

JULY MEETING AGENDA

One of the agenda items for the meeting in July will be the terms of the current committee members and who will be serving a second term with the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Rennert and seconded by Mr. Anderson it was **APPROVED** by roll call vote:

Ms. Foley -	Aye
Mr. Anderson -	Aye
Mr. Verrill -	Aye
Ms. Rennert -	Aye
Mr. Martines-	Aye
Ms. Williams -	Aye
Ms. McGonigle -	Aye
Ms. Turnquist -	Aye
Mr. Karian -	Aye
Ms. Schunemann -	Aye

to **ADJOURN** the meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn H. Dee

