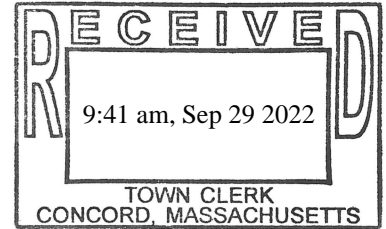


**Town of Concord**  
**Economic Vitality Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**August 3, 2022**



**Present:** Jennifer Schunemann, Chair, Dawn Rennert, Steven Verrill, Marie Foley, Mark Martines, Jennifer McGonigle, Cato Anderson and Mike Lawson  
**Staff:** Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management, Beth Williams, Tourism Manager, Mary Hartman, Select Board  
**Others:** Gregory Higgins, Jennifer Clarke and Zannah Noe

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 P.M.

**CALENDAR FOR MEETINGS**

Ms. Schunemann asked the committee members about the meeting schedule going forward. It was concluded that the third Wednesday of every month would be the best time to meet while it is still being done over the Zoom platform. To accommodate all members both retail and otherwise it was agreed to rotate the time every month with one month conducting the meeting at 8:30 A.M. and the next month conducting the meeting at 4:00 P.M. All members present agreed that this was a good idea.

**TOWN UPDATES**

Ms. Williams gave an update on what has been happening in town since the last meeting. The Concord Trolley began servicing riders on July 2, 2022 and has been well received. We are currently in week 4 of service and it is carrying 20 to 30 people per day to various areas in town including West Concord, the North Bridge and Orchard House. Most people will get on the Trolley at the Train Station. The ridership continues to evolve and she is adjusting the schedule each week based on the MBTA Train Schedule for the week. She has asked the riders to take a survey of their experience and they are very satisfied with what the Trolley has to offer.

A proposal has been submitted for the Federal Land Access Grant which includes the towns of Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and the National Park. The grant would cover 3 years of operating the Trolley. Ms. Williams received many letters of support for receiving the Grant.

Ms. Schunemann commended Ms. Williams on everything she has done for the town to assist the business community and boost tourism in town.

Ms. Williams stated that the following events are coming up in town:

**August 6, 2022** – Sidewalk Celebration – This will be held on a Saturday and Walden St. will be closed to traffic. There will be many activities going on and she encourages everyone to attend.

She stated that we will continue to support West Concord businesses during the construction that is currently going on between Beharrell St. and Nashoba Brook Bakery. The work is being done by National Grid as they work to upgrade services in town.

**September 24, 2022** – Porch Fest including the unveiling of a mural that was painted at 30 Beharrell St.

**October 15, 2022** – Discover West Concord Day

She also stated that Expedia is in town taking pictures for their website, through the end of August. Also, the television program, **Road Masters**, is currently filming in Concord. The premise is two people drive around the country touring historic places. The segment will air at a future date.

Ms. Foley stated that the Chamber of Commerce has launched a new Facebook page and is promoting the Concord Trolley and businesses around town.

The Concord Business Partnership will be hosting a social event at the new West Village Tavern, which has opened in the space formerly occupied by the 99 Restaurant.

Discover Concord will highlight businesses in West Concord which are open during the construction on Commonwealth Avenue.

### **ECONOMIC VITALITY OFFICER**

Ms. Hartman stated that the timeline for hiring an Economic Vitality Officer has been moved up by 1 year and will be part of the FY 2023 budget cycle using ARPA Funds. We are looking to start recruiting for the position in October 2022.

Ms. Schunemann stated that she is very pleased that this position will be part of the FY 2023 budget cycle and thanked Ms. Hartman for the work she has done to make this happen.

The Committee has reviewed the letter Mr. Martines has drafted to ask the Select Board to consider hiring someone for this position. Ms. Hartman stated that the Committee should send the letter to the Select Board and Ms. LaFleur, Town Manager. Ms. LaFleur has the final decision on the hiring of a person for this position.

Ms. Schunemann stated that the letter was very helpful and thanked Mr. Martines for his work on it. Any changes to the letter must be reviewed and approved in an Open Meeting. She suggested removing the part of the letter that referred to the budget and the hiring of this position during this fiscal year since that has already been addressed. She also suggested doing a spelling and grammar check and then sending it to the Select Board and the Town Manager.

Mr. Martines stated that the letter has two sections, 90% of it is referencing the hiring of an Economic Vitality Officer and 10% of the letter references that the business community wants to be involved in the hiring of key positions in town.

Ms. Hartman stated that all hiring decisions are made by the Town Manager. Any Board or Committee is given the opportunity to write a letter to the Town Manager about certain positions which are being recruited.

Ms. Schunemann clarified some questions with the letter including the fact that Concord has approximately 1,000,000 visitors per year. She also clarified that the reason the Technological Space in town has been reduced over the years is because the property values are rising. She stated she will make a few edits to the letter including deleting the second part, involving key hires in town, and then send the final version to the Committee. If anyone has any comments you may only share them with Ms. Schunemann. She will take comments until Thursday, August 4, 2022 at the end of the day and then will send the letter to the Select Board and Town Manager on Friday.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Rennert it was **APPROVED**, by roll call vote, to make the edits that were suggested and perform a grammar check, circulate the letter to the committee and accept comments through the end of the day on August 4, 2022 and send the letter to the Select Board and Town Manager on August 5, 2022:

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

### **FUTURE PROJECTS**

Mr. Martines stated that this Committee should review the Thoreau District Zoning proposal that was defeated. How does the business community send ideas to the Planning Board about large projects? There was a very vocal citizens group concerning this issue and it was all focused on the redevelopment of the shopping plaza where Crosby's Market is located.

Ms. Schunemann stated that reviewing this issue is not in the charge of this Committee.

Ms. Rasmussen stated that the Planning Board did extensive outreach to the business community concerning the Thoreau District Zoning proposal and there was not a high level of participation from the business community. The Planning Board tried to address all of the misinformation that was being conveyed, about the project, by citizens of town.

Ms. Schunemann stated that the Planning Board did a great job of reaching out to the business community and she wished there was a larger response.

Ms. Hartman stated that the charge for this committee is focused on Retail Sustainability and Tourism and the Committee needs to focus on that.

Ms. Schunemann welcomed our newest member Mike Lawson who joined the meeting after experiencing some computer issues. She stated that his expertise and voice is very welcome on the Committee.

It was agreed that the new Economic Vitality Officer should take charge of certain topics facing the business community.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER TERMS & NEW MEMBERS**

Ms. Schunemann stated that almost all of the members of the Committee's terms expire at the end of the year. She asked that the committee members think about whether they want to be reappointed and for 1, 2 or 3 years. It is the responsibility of the Select Board to appoint Committee Members. If anyone knows of someone who might like to join the Committee, you can pass that information on to Ms. Schunemann. She will then decide whether or not to recommend the person be appointed to the Committee.

Ms Schunemann stated that her term will end at the conclusion of 2022 and she will not seek reappointment.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Schunemann suggested that at the next meeting we brainstorm concerning what the committee should be focusing on moving forward.

Ms. Schunemann recognized Zannah Noe who was present during the meeting. Ms. Williams met Ms. Noe at an event and she expressed interest in joining the Committee. Ms. Schunemann will speak with Ms. Noe about joining the committee.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 8:30 A.M. by Zoom Conferencing.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Mr. Verrill -	Aye
Mr. Martines -	Aye
Ms. Williams-	Aye
Mr. Anderson-	Aye
Ms. Rennert-	Aye
Ms. Foley -	Aye

Mr. Lawson - Aye  
Ms. McGonigle - Aye  
Ms. Schunemann - Aye

to **ADJOURN** the meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carolyn H. Dee*