

Town of Mount Desert
Economic Development Committee Meeting
January 11, 2023
Draft Minutes

Attending:

In person:, Dan McKay (chair), Durlin Lunt, Matt Hart, Megan Bailey, Martha Dudman, Kathy Miller

By zoom: Stephanie Reece, Tony Smith, Jen Judd-McGee, Averel Wilson

Absent: Jamie Blaine, Kerri Sands, Don Graves, Nancy Ho, Rick Wheeler

Guest: Wendy Todd, Executive Director of the Mount Desert Chamber of Commerce

Dan convened the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

1. Minutes. Matt moved the approval of the minutes of the October 12, 2022 meeting. Megan seconded and the minutes were approved.
2. Updates
 - a. Broadband. Kathy reported that Spectrum has identified about 40 homes in the Town that lack service. This translates to broadband via Spectrum being available to 97% of the Town. The cost to the Town to provide that service would be steep (over \$100,000). The alternative would be an all-fiber optic solution through Consolidated Communications throughout the Town. Implementing such a solution would be extensive and probably only feasible if part of an Island-wide effort. At least some other towns are interested (notably Tremont). The earliest work on such a system could commence would be 2024, and funding could be a barrier as the Town of Mount Desert would not qualify as being “underserved under current government guidelines.
 - b. Skating Rink. Kathy reported that about \$30,000 has been raised to date for the skating rink project from local businesses, seasonal residents and year-round residents. The money was raised through the auspices of the Town of Mount Desert Community Development Corporation which purchased the rink and related assets and then donated them to the Town together with a cash donation to fund start-up expenses. Additional fundraising continues. Utilizing donated funds, the Town has engaged Peter Bronson, a former professional hockey player and skating enthusiast as a part time contractor to oversee rink operations.
 - c. Stakeholders Meetings. The Island-wide stakeholder group continued to meet throughout the fall. Dan McKay and Megan Bailey represented the CDC. Kathy Miller and Jen Judd-McGee also participated representing MD 365 and the Chamber, respectively. The focus has been on organizing an Island-wide “housing summit” to address the scarcity on the Island of year-round and seasonal workforce housing.
 - d. Comprehensive Planning and Impact on Short Term Rentals. A special committee has been set up to work on an update top the Town’s comprehensive plan. The

current plan was approved in 2009. The LUZO Committee is working on an ordinance to begin to address regulation of short-term rentals in the Town.

3. Dan reported that, after some back and forth with the insurance company, he had succeeded in securing renewal of the existing directors and officers liability insurance for the CDC. He again raised the question of whether the Town would appropriate funds sufficient to cover this item in next year's Town budget.
4. Dan solicited thoughts from the Committee as to additional issues that the Committee should address in the coming year.
5. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan McKay