

Town of Hammond Economic Development Committee Meeting

November 13, 2013

Hammond Village Community Center

Members in Attendance:

Erica Demick, YesterYear Vintage Doors

Mike Stock, Riverbay Adventure Inn

Shelly Youngs, Hammond Village Mayor

Howard Demick, Town Board Representative

Larry Foster, Schermerhorn Harbor

William (Bill) Denale, Cottages at Chippewa Point

Mary Hamilton, A Moving Experience

Tom Weldon, Singer Castle

Ron Papke, Planning Board Representative

Ron Bertram, Hammond Town Supervisor

Members Absent:

Nancy Williams, Christensen Realty USA

Others: *Lynn Foster*

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by co-chair Erica Demick.

Business After Hours Event:

There was a lot of positive feedback regarding the event. \$500 was raised through the silent auction that was conducted during the evening. While the committee's goal is to focus on business development and not event development and coordination, Erica suggested we plan another similar event for the spring and see how that goes.

Unfortunately very few surveys were completed during the event or turned in since. A discussion regarding it suggested a restructuring of the survey to possibly simplify and shorten it, and then resend to local businesses along with an incentive to entice their return.

Erica did post a list of the proposed tag lines on the www.visithammondny.com website and received several responses that will be added to those received previously.

It was suggested a list of business emails of those attending the After Hours event be developed on a spreadsheet. Mary will take care of that.

Website:

Erica commented that the www.visithammondny.com website is back up and running normal again after a time offline. Thanks to Erica for all of her work to resolve the issues.

Photo Contest: There were over 50 entries for the 1st Annual Photo Contest. Erica will attempt to put them in a file and send them out to committee members to pick their top 3 choices. She would like choices by December 1.

New Business Members

We have five new members: River Forge, Bruce Dana Photography, Henry's Heating and Plumbing, Chippewa Bay Community Club, and Foster's Harbor Inn. There currently are 123 known businesses on the list of Hammond businesses that has been developed and 51 are members. Erica

asked for someone to go after the 71 remaining businesses again to make sure they have been invited and tell them it's only a \$50 one-time fee to join. Shelly volunteered to take on this task.

Financial Statement

The current balance of \$2515.83 will be handed over to Town on January 1 and the Economic Committee funds will become added to the line item that was established for the 2014 budget. Supervisor Bertram explained the town board has earmarked \$2500 for this area and to which the 2515.83 will be added. From that point forward, any membership checks written must be made out to the Town of Hammond. An excel spreadsheet regarding the economic funds will be maintained with a monthly printout made available.

SUNY Canton Small Business Development Center Presentation

Michele Collins and Brooke Brouse, representing the SUNY Canton Small Business Development Center (SBDC), attended the meeting to provide an overview of their services and educate the committee about future possibilities and how they can be modeled to fit our needs. The center offers business help with marketing, new insurance laws, government procurement, all tailored to individual needs. They offer free one-on-one business counseling. They track information on grants for community development and help to identifying landmarks and possible development opportunities.

The SBDC can provide training to business owners on individual topics, provide instruction that is usually based on what the area may need and can include: e-commerce training, marketing, affordable care act, business startup, buying and selling a business (i.e. the way you set up a business can affect how you buy and sell). They can conduct workshops in Hammond and they also do training at their SUNY Canton office setting. Topics are often based on what is trending at the time. They told us the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation did a survey of businesses to see what people were interested in. Michele offered to obtain a survey from other towns to see what type of information they have requested and received. The center also has access to online sites where businesses can go for webinars.

To get started, Michelle suggested the committee pick a topic and set a date for the first workshop. They will do a survey after the class to see what else businesses are interested in. Occasionally there is a minimal charge but for the most part most admission is free.

After a discussion, the committee decided on three 1 ½ hour workshops:

1st workshop- Getting your business on the map workshop

2nd workshop - Tourism workshop

3rd workshop – Facebook – e-commerce series -

Mike, Erica, and Mary will work on developing this further and Michele will send a format of the types of programs they have done in the past.

RiverQuest Initiative – Ron Bertram told the committee he was contacted by RiverQuest and asked if Hammond would be interested in becoming a “friend” of this initiative. He would like to involve the committee in this endeavor. Tom expounded on the Aquaterrium in Brockville that is part of the RiverQuest creation. It is ready to open and includes an impressive learning center that is devoted to information about the river with a re-creation of the Singer Castle Library, a ropes course that looks like a 3-story high tall ship, a pilot house replication of an old steamship and many more interactive activities that all talk about this area.

Riverquest1000Islands.com – is looking to connect businesses around the region. It has several partners who are major attractions and who will have a kiosk that is mobile and can be used in many venues to keep educating the public about our landmarks (Singer Castle, Boat Museum, etc) Mike's business is a member as is Singer Castle. There are different levels of involvement and prices for membership but to date there has been no fee for businesses.

It was suggested that RiverQuest be invited to our December meeting. Tom will make those arrangements.

Rack Card System

As was mentioned at the September meeting, a rack card system may be something to look into posting at the Town Hall and maybe the Bank and Museum (in the summer) Mike checked and the 1000 Islands Tourism Council still has the big racks for \$25. A suggestion was also made to invest in business card holders. Mike will check into this.

Erica suggested we table discussion of the Comprehensive plan until the February Meeting.

Slogan

Discussion was held and there were more ideas submitted but committee members were indecisive about the next step. They will continue to discuss in this in December.

River Weekend

During a short discussion on a proposed River Weekend for next summer, the statement was made, "there is no place on the river to do it." We may need to focus on a different type of venue. Erica will put something on website to have people attend next meeting to offer ideas.

New Meeting Date:

Due to a conflict with the Town Board meeting schedule, the Economic Committee will be meeting at 6:00 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. This will begin in January 2014.

The next meeting is Wednesday, December 11th, 2013 at 6:00 pm.