

Commission Business Support & Outreach Subcommittee Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Steve Ferrigno, Chiaku Chukwuogor, Kristin Dilaj
Staff Present: Cynthia van Zelm

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2019

Ferrigno made a motion to approve the October 17, 2019 minutes. Dilaj seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Any additions to Work Plan Priorities

The Subcommittee reviewed Work Plan Priorities for the Business Support & Outreach Subcommittee. There were no changes.

b. Discussion of 2022 Action Items

Dilaj asked if there was a template for business visitations. Ferrigno pointed to the form in the agenda packet; he noted that exit interviews of businesses that left Mansfield had not been done and there was no template form.

Chukwuogor and Dilaj both thought the interview form should be shorter. Chukwuogor thought the focus should be on asking businesses what challenges they are experiencing. Dilaj said it was important to find out why a business locates in Mansfield.

Dilaj also suggested asking businesses what assistance they want from the Mansfield government.

Dilaj suggested that a question be asked about how a business wants to be categorized on the on-line business directory, and if they want to be featured in Town social media posts.

Van Zelm suggested that Mansfield Downton Partnership Board members focus on business visits in Downtown Storrs. Ferrigno suggested that the EDC focus its visits on the other commercial nodes in Four Corners, Perkins Corner, and southern Mansfield.

Van Zelm said Partnership Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson was finishing revising the town-wide business list. Ferrigno suggested the Subcommittee work off of that list and match interviewers with businesses where they know the owner or manager.

Ferrigno said visits could be in person or virtual. He said it has been helpful to have two interviewers in the past. He suggested that all interviewers complete one interview by the end of February.

Ferrigno will develop a new set of interview questions.

Chukwuogor said it is important to circulate information to businesses about resources and how they can get involved in Mansfield. Van Zelm said Ms. Paterson is finishing up an event guide for Mansfield Downton Partnership events that provides many opportunities for businesses in terms of having booths at events sponsorship, etc. Van Zelm will provide the Event Guide to Subcommittee members.

Dilaj suggested various ways to get information about events out to residents including a magnet with a list of annual events with dates, and including a list of events in the Town newsletter.

The Subcommittee talked about the resources at the CT Small Business Development Center. Van Zelm said the 4-Town economic development group (Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland) is working on a series of webinars with UConn under the leadership of Cara Workman who is on the 4-Town steering committee. Van Zelm will share information when it becomes available.

Chukwuogor also suggested ascertaining what the CT office of the Small Business Administration can offer businesses. Van Zelm will follow-up.

Dilaj also suggested seminars for Mansfield women-owned businesses.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.