

7/28 Minutes Town of Otis Revitalization Hybrid* Committee Meeting
GYM, Otis Town Hall
July 28th, 10:00 AM

Members Present: Stacey Silkey Shultze, Jackie Gentile, Cynthia Fletcher, Tim Wighton, Susan Ebitz. Glenn Steinberg (Zoom)

Members Absent: Hal Kobrin, Celeste Watman

Guests: Cathy Bezozo (liaison from OWL), Kate Meierdiercks, Geoff Pigmon, Renee Dryg

1. Call to Order: 10:01 AM

2. June minutes unanimously approved

3. **Quarterly Report 2** was approved, will be sent to the selectboard prior to the selectboard meeting on 8/12.

4. Updates from working groups:

- **Needs Assessment Survey** – Close to 500 community members and 5 businesses have taken the survey. Some feedback about having to choose a set number of items to continue the survey and the length of the survey were cited as problematic. More direct outreach will be done to solicit more respondents and businesses. A direct mailing of the survey link may be used in conjunction when the master plan is updated.
- **Promotion & Community Events or Quick Wins** – Food trucks are a huge success and may continue into the fall. Glenn asked if food trucks could be available on Saturdays. Jackie reminded everyone that we wouldn't want to interfere with local businesses. The Revitalization Committee has a Facebook account to advertise town events which will be posted on Thursdays. Food Truck schedules and menus will be published on Mondays. Members are urged to take "screen shots" of these events and post them on their own sites to "amplify" the event. The *Otis Observer* is featuring monthly town events in the "Otis is the Place to Be" section.
- **Business, Culture & Recreation**- Stacey looked into bylaws that might be prohibiting business. The committee is grateful that the town is not enforcing the permit to prohibit the sale of confections before 10 AM on Sundays. Glenn has developed a Fact Sheet about Otis and a series of interview questions that could be used to solicit potential businesses that might want to locate in town. There will be two focus group sessions for businesses in September to assess their needs, see if they would like to revitalize a business association and consider how to make the town more business friendly. The committee is pursuing ways to work with OHC, OPT, Otis Library and Farmington River Regional School to take advantage of the meaningful history of Otis. Next year, marks the 250th anniversary of Major General Henry Knox's trek moving canons and artillery from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. The committee received a recommendation to host a winter ice fishing tournament as well as consider an outdoor concert featuring local musicians. Grants to develop trails will be explored.
- **Downtown** – The speed limit in the center of town has been lowered to 30 mph. in the village district. Tim was acknowledged for his work on this project. A letter of inquiry as to the status of the bank, Terranova's and the Olde Otis Inn will be drafted. Members discussed possible short term beautification projects but acknowledged that no action can be taken if the town doesn't own the property.

- **Infrastructure** – If awarded, the Massachusetts Technical Assistance Grant later this fall, the town would get input on the status and suggestions regarding Harmony Hall, Terranova's and the Olde Otis Inn. (more recently known as Fratelli's) An Environmental Scan will begin for these properties.
- **Services & Population Retention/Growth** – Tim, Cynthia and Stacey have been discussing the feasibility for elderly residents to "age in place" and younger families to move to town. How can the town secure a funding source for a feasibility study that could tap into the various groups and individuals who through a collaborative effort might meet these needs?
- **Cost/Benefit** – A next step would be brainstorming a rubric that could be edited and approved by the board to evaluate future projects.

5. **Environmental Scan Narrative Files Template & Assignments** – Stacey noted as a community, we're losing a history of projects including the work that had been previously done. She and Cynthia created a template that could be used to share this narrative information to all town boards and committees that would want to use it. Stacy and Kate will begin working on an Environmental Scan for Terranova's. Susan suggested a scan for Harmony Hall as the town owned that property.

6. A unanimous motion to adjourn the meeting was made 11:42 AM.

Next meeting: August 25th **Town Hall*, 10:00 AM**

Future Meetings: quarterly report to selectboard due in July, , September 22nd, quarterly report due to the selectboard in October, October 27th, November 24th, December 22nd, report to Selectboard due in January 2026, January 26, 2026,
