

Minutes - Town of Otis Revitalization Committee
Otis Town Hall Meeting Room
Monday, January 27, 202

Members Present: Stacey Silkey -Schultz, Chair, Susan Brofman, Susan Ebitz, Secretary, Jackie Gentile, Hal Kobrin (Alternate), Glenn Steinberg, Vice – Chair, (Phone), Celeste Watman, Dr. Tim Wighton

Guest: Robert Rich

Stacey called the meeting to order at 11:35 AM after which each member introduced themselves. All members agreed that they love Otis and would not only like to see the “downtown” return to its former greatness but also be inviting to all members of the community, particularly young families.

The first order of business was to elect officers. Hal made a motion, seconded by Celeste, to name Stacey as chair. Stacey was unanimously elected. Susan E. made a motion seconded by Stacey nominating Glenn, vice chair. The vote was unanimous. Susan E. offered to be the secretary, she will check with Lyn about a separate website address, and the 48-hour meeting deadline to post agendas.

The Committee Charge Statement was reviewed. Members discussed their understanding of the task at hand, and all were made aware of our responsibility to report back to the Selectboard in approximately three months. Although downtown Otis is the target of the revitalization effort, Susan B. clarified the Selectboard’s revision to the Charge statement to include the whole town so that in case the committee discovered a grant that would benefit another project in town, the committee could facilitate the community in taking advantage of the opportunity. All members reported on their prior work and connections made that could prove to be invaluable to applying for funding for future opportunities. The Berkshire Regional Planning Board and One Berkshire were two of the organizations named.

In identifying the next steps, Glenn suggested that the committee develop a problem statement. In the lengthy discussion that followed, it became apparent that there were many aspects that had to be considered before finalizing the language of the statement to present to the selectboard, community and all interested parties. Hal produced the Otis Master Plan that had been published in 2016. A discussion to revise this document ensued. In the discussion, the relationship between this new committee and the elected Planning board came up. Hal provided clarification. Stacy suggested the committee collaborate with the Planning Board to produce an updated Master Plan. Susan E. will investigate the cost of using Survey Monkey for two surveys: one for businesses and one for the community. The Revitalization Committee has no budget but can make recommendations and research the potential costs.

Tim was genuinely concerned about the speed trucks are driving through town. The members of the committee agreed. Glenn began listing strengths and opportunities for growth. Every member of the committee contributed to this discussion. It was agreed that priorities for growth might include 1. Social cohesion, 2. Infrastructure, 3. Economic opportunity and 4. Public Health. Tim suggested that there were several lanes of thinking about these various categories. Prior to the next meeting, everyone on the committee will suggest the possible 'lanes' that emerge after completing an analysis of Otis's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Each member is tasked with submitting an individual SWOT analysis to Susan E. by February 17th so that she might collate the results for the next meeting.

The last order of business was to determine that the committee will meet at town hall on the fourth Monday of the month at 10:00 AM and meet till noon if necessary. Since no member of the committee has a "pro" Zoom account, Susan E. will check with the Planning board to see if we can get a link for our monthly meetings from their account.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, February 24th at 10:00 AM in Town Hall.**
The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Ebitz, Secretary