

## Town of Shaftsbury Economic Development Committee

Monday, May 13, 2024, 3 p.m.

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

### 1. Call to order

The meeting came to order at 3 p.m. Present were Rick Bennett (chair), Shari Miller, Marita Cockburn, Andrea Bacchi (via Zoom), town administrator Paula Iken, and webmaster/Zoom coordinator Jen Holley. Also present was guest Jonathan Cooper of the Bennington County Regional Commission. Mr. Bennett noted that new member John Verrochia is traveling.

### 2. Conflict of interest

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

### 3. Jonathan Cooper of BCRC – project scope of work

Mr. Cooper described the Municipal Planning Grant process. It has begun with a business inventory and data analysis, with help from a UVM intern. A property inventory within the Village Center (and of large employers near the Village such as Dailey Precast) will follow, as well as business interviews, sketching out of development possibilities, and the issuance of a report. The study will explore as many ways Shaftsburyians make their livings as possible. The goal is to understand the commercial potential in the Village and how to take advantage of it.

A second part of the project is developing an economic development strategy for the larger Town.

Ms. Miller asked whether the self-employed might hesitate to share information. Ms. Bacchi said she had heard from such individuals that they wanted to be heard more clearly.

Mr. Cooper said the committee could help in developing a survey for business owners, and in reviewing the data the BCRC collects. Mr. Bennett suggested committee members might want to focus on particular elements of the business community, such as farms. Mr. Bennett said he hoped that the business community would have a more robust website presence.

Mr. Cooper returned to the second phase of the project, an economic development plan for the entire town. He suggested considering a product that could be consumed by the world outside the Town as well as inside – a kind of outreach tool. This project, whatever form it will take, will begin in FY 25.

### 4. Discuss subcommittee for cataloging Home Based workers

This item was tabled.

### 5. Other business

Mr. Bennett mentioned a kiosk or other outreach to be sponsored by Shaftsbury Solar, should that project be approved. He mentioned calling VTTrans about a bench for the bus stop. He mentioned the 2026 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and perhaps publishing (on the website?) school essays about the anniversary (which are being sought now). He thought the Bennington Area trail map could be linked to on the website. A business directory could be placed on the website. (A disclaimer could acknowledge that every effort was made to list all businesses, but

that some might be missed.) (The directory could be built by the committee rather than wait for BCRC's inventory.)

Mr. Bennett will follow up with the Historical Society and schools re the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Planters at Scott's auto repair and at the cemetery were brought up. Perhaps Dailey's could help sponsor such things as they make extensive use of Route 7A through town.

Ms. Cockburn noted that a historic spring opposite the Iron Kettle Motel might be publicized. She didn't know who owns the property. Mr. Bennett noted it could tie into the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Maybe a historic marker?

6. Schedule next meeting

Wednesday May 29 at 3 p.m. was chosen for the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Bacchi moved to adjourn at 3:53 p.m. Ms. Cockburn seconded the motion, which passed by acclamation.