

Housatonic Improvement Committee

March 10, 2022

Attending: Dan Bailly, Patrick Barrett, Eric Gabriel, Louise Goldsmith, Angela Lomanto, and Bev Nourse.

Dan read the required Massachusetts statements.

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by unanimous agreement, 5-0. (Patrick did not vote; he came to the meeting after the meeting was called to order.)

Acceptance of Minutes - The minutes from 2/10/2022 were approved with the correction that the Housatonic Flower Fund is not part of Housatonic the Beautiful. The minutes were approved with that correction by a 5-0 vote with one abstention.

Betsy Andrus, the Executive Director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce attended the meeting as invited. She offered comments about a village-wide event based on her experience organizing outdoor events in the Berkshires. Here are her comments:

- No matter what size the event, it's impossible to move people without directly catching their attention
- have a plan that "directs" people to move
- don't pull people's attention from the main event or "circle" (path)
- by creating a continuous grouping of activities, people will pay attention and you create a "thing"
- need clarity for crowd direction
- it usually takes 3 years to develop an event and get participation
- restrooms, parking, and safety are most important
- food is also important but it's difficult because of staffing. Food helps keep people at the event
- try to create a lot of movement and color
- make features free so there are no barriers to attendance
- purchase Facebook ads
- the town manager's office issues the permit for a one-day entertainment license and hawker's license for items being sold
- you will have to go before the DRT committee
- the budget could be \$500 - \$600, dependent upon whether you have sponsors and how much you spend on publicity. Facebook ads are \$25 - \$35 each. You could also charge for space and refund the fee if the person/group shows up
- depending on the time of year, you can get permission to include a notice in an email that goes out through the schools. WSBS will generally do a live interview. Press releases and community boards are other avenues and the chamber can list the event. An ad in the Shopper's Guide is \$300. Even with all of that, word of mouth is best.
- Recruit groups or businesses to take ownership of activities like when the GB Rotary organized a selfie station sponsored by Sotheby's
- Six months is not enough time to plan
- Aim small for the first year

- You'll need an event map, permission from property owners, parking plan and logistics, someone to take responsibility for the overall plan, sponsorship letter with specific dollar amounts and marketing budget, and an overall budget for the event.

The committee discussed the event with these comments:

August seems soon and people are busy

Pulse and Muse are interested, maybe the Fire Department?

Keep it contained in the park

The deputy chief mentioned an old-fashioned Housy block party

We need to know what the town can contribute

Keep it small to start, activities around the playground equipment, heavy on kid-friendly activities

Boondocks Film could bring portable screen and audio to show a movie

Could there be a simulcast of the event?

Ask existing food establishments before bringing in "outside" food vendors

Next steps: Dan and Eric will draft a description of the event then action items can be developed from there

All Things Housatonic:

An open house was held for those who had requested the RFP for the Housatonic School. There have been 15 requests so far. A promotional video has been developed. Eric will send the link to all.

The roof of the school has been covered.

In the Spring, the Housy Rail Trail will be covered with airport mix.

Citizen Speak:

Ben Elliott offered that Hilltown Hot Pies is a potential food vendor for a village-wide event. He mentioned that a movie in summer would depend on where the screen is. He saw 3 or 4 groups tour the school taking photos.

Pat Hollenbeck mentioned that the library had an outdoor movie and that it needs a producer. When the library had an event with a portable zoo is cost around \$500. The library can help with a village-wide event. He also mentioned that on April 16th, the last day of the Winter Farmer's Market, Extraspecial Teas is having an event and on July 2, there is another.

Veronica Bone, the program coordinator for Berkshire Pulse, would like to be involved in the village-wide event.

Next Meetings: March 24, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Adjourned: 7:48 pm by unanimous agreement, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Lomanto