

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEMBER TOWN MEETING

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020

2PM – 3PM

VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82980074347?pwd=b0l3NmJMMnRYdndrUHQwc2VUQ3crdz09> - Meeting ID: 829 8007 4347 - Passcode: 7kRpeJ

Call in:

1 646 558 8656 - Meeting ID: 829 8007 4347 - Passcode: 178063

Welcome!

Introductions

Review and consideration of draft MOU to create a 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Steering Committee

Review and consideration of the Plan's implementation matrix

Review and consideration of next steps for the member towns to proceed with task implementation

Other businesses

Next meeting date, time, agenda items

Adjournment

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEMBER TOWN MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 14, 2020

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Welcome –

Eric Trott welcomed the attendees to the kick off meeting between the 4 towns who have worked together to prepare the 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Plan.

Introductions –

Each attendee introduced themselves and offered some reflections on the Plan.

Eric Trott – Coventry - Is excited about the work that has been done cooperatively between the 4 towns and the consultant to prepare the Plan and believes it is a very viable template for measurable and impactful tasks to support the towns. Although the pandemic struck at the end of the preparation of the Plan, it is believed that the Plan is even more relevant at this time and many initiatives can be moved forward.

Mike Rosen – Tolland – Is enthusiastic about the Plan and its potential impacts on regional economic development. It provides us with additional strength as we are more attractive together in encouraging the region as a destination and focus. The key with this Plan, when compared to other similar ones, is the implementation matrix.

Todd Longo – Tolland – Believes the Plan is a unique opportunity for the region to market the different assets and play on our strengths.

Jim Hutton – Tolland – Believes that the Plan creates a great place to continue the cooperative energy and work that has been built over the past year.

Ryan Hannigan – Tolland - Is excited about the Plan and looks forward to working on it. Believes it's important to have business representation in the group that is implementing the Plan.

Josh Kelly – Bolton – Has discussed the Plan with the Bolton Selectpersons and appreciates that the Plan is action oriented in its focus.

Patrice Carson – Bolton – Is looking forward to keep the momentum going with the Plan. Appreciates the compartmentalization of the actions. Believes that pieces can be added as the Plan moves forward and that feedback from stakeholders will be important. Hopes we can avoid 'Plan Fatigue' with the implementation tasks.

Kyleen Mike – Bolton – Is excited to help with the Plan implementation. Has had a great experience working with Coventry Parks and Recreation recently.

Toni Moran – Mansfield – Is glad Mansfield was able to be part of the effort. Reported that a new Town Manager has been hired who will be involved with next steps. Mentioned that a marketing brochure is being prepared at this time which can contribute to the work to being done.

Cynthia VanZelm – Mansfield – Mentioned the relevance to the recently unveiled State of CT campaign 'CampusCT' to help maintain recently graduated college students in the state. The Plan directly relates to that effort. Discussed the importance of recreation and the natural beauty of the towns being emphasized with the Plan.

Cara – UCONN – Discussed UCONN's perspective and the importance of having the ability to leverage regional activities during the university's 'off season'.

Candice Corcione – Tolland County Chamber of Commerce – Is excited to participate in the effort. Discussed the Chamber's Economic Development Committee being aware of the progress of the Plan.

Memorandum of Understanding –

The reps from the 4 towns mentioned that the MOU appears to be in good order. The matter of residents vs. town officials was discussed.

Meeting minutes and agendas will need to be posted by each town.

The draft will be finalized and forwarded to the elected bodies of each town for adoption.

Implementation Matrix –

A discussion occurred about the types of priorities that could be focused on initially. Parks, recreation, outdoor activities have been very relevant over the past few months. This priority could be built on moving forward.

Business development is another important focus area.

The development of a calendar of events that is shared between the 4 towns and their respective websites and social media is another viable priority.

A discussion occurred regarding Coventry's work on the '06238' town calendar platform.

Mansfield has recently hired a communications specialist that may be able to contribute to the calendar concept.

Cara and Cynthia mentioned the importance of sharing all that occurs at UCONN throughout the year.

An inventory of regional assets is another priority for year 1 – including agricultural, recreation, cultural, and business examples.

A landing webpage on each town website that links to a collective regional one would be desirable.

A discussion occurred about the development and use of a 'brand' or 'campaign' for the region was part of the Plan that did not get fully executed. This will need to be discussed further.

Candice from the Tolland Chamber mentioned that each town is a Chamber member and its website could serve as a good clearinghouse of the events on a shared calendar for the region.

Next meeting date, time, agenda items –

A day during the week of November 16 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

Finalizing the MOU and considering initial tasks will be discussed at the next meeting.

**4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN
MEMBER TOWN MEETING**

AGENDA

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2020

2PM – 3PM

VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86415656080?pwd=RXFwaEswTHJieGpoSTE3cnZLMTBwUT09> - Meeting ID: 864 1565 6080 - Passcode: 0QdEdH

Call in:

+1 646 558 8656 - Meeting ID: 864 1565 6080 - Passcode: 916217

Welcome!

Review status of draft MOU to create a 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Steering Committee

Review of the Plan's implementation matrix – consider priorities

Consider 'campaign', 'slogan' or 'identification' of the 4 town efforts/entity

Review and consideration of next steps to be taken in November/December

Other businesses

Next meeting date, time, agenda items

Adjournment

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEMBER TOWN TEAM MEETING NOTES

NOVEMBER 17, 2020 – via Zoom

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Welcome –

Meeting attendees were welcomed to the meeting between the 4 towns who have worked together to prepare the 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Plan. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

Memorandum of Understanding –

The reps from the 4 towns mentioned that the MOU appears to be in good order. They are in the process of being adopted by the governing bodies of each town.

Implementation Matrix –

Several ideas of initial tasks that can be pursued by the Team were discussed, including:

- : Farmers' Market inventory – regional vendors
- : Town asset inventory – open space, parks, outdoor activities, recreation, businesses, etc.
- : Walktober – The Last Green Valley resources
- : Joshua's Trust properties
- : 4 town calendar of events
- : Wayfinding signage
- : Webpage development – shared links between each town
- : Winter outdoor activities – snowshoe, cross country skiing, ice fishing – including instructional information
- : Regional concert series
- : Holiday house/business decorating and lights – car tour
- : UCONN programs – workforce development, internships, campus activities

A discussion occurred about the potential of a 4 town event calendar. Each town and UCONN provided details on each respective website, as well as social media used.

Richard White from the Coventry Arts Guild provided details about the Windham Arts organization, regional cultural activities and events.

Campaign – slogan –

Bolton is currently in the process of creating a municipal brand. Mansfield has recently gone through this process.

A brief overview of the process of developing and considering a slogan/campaign during the Plan development was provided. The concepts that were drafted were reviewed and discussed.

‘Home.Grown’ and ‘Neighborhood Next Door’ were two that were more popular than others that were created, but were not unilaterally felt to be the best. The ‘CT Lakes Region’ was also discussed, which seems to have potential since each town possesses a lake resource. Although not all towns feel that it is a significant part of their identity.

This matter will continue to be discussed and evaluated, as it is not an easy one to address and find agreement.

Next steps –

The following are the next steps that will occur up to the scheduled meeting next month: each town will adopt the MOU, team members will continue to find interested stakeholders to invite to the group, the 4 town calendar of events will be explored further, the slogan/campaign idea will continue to be examined, a stakeholder and committee list will be started.

Other business –

None.

Next meeting date, time, agenda items -

A day during the week of December 14 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

Agenda items that were on the November agenda will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment –

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.

**4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN
MEMBER TOWN TEAM MEETING**

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020, 2PM – 3PM

VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86049210805?pwd=K3lHTmZQZUI2UkV3WGlvVHhXZ1VtUT09> -Meeting ID: 860 4921 0805 - Passcode: 2ZD2dQ

Call in: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 860 4921 0805 - Passcode: 048103

Welcome!

Review status of adoption of MOU to create a 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Steering Committee and selection of Town representatives

Future consideration and election of Steering Committee Officers

Review of the Plan's implementation matrix – consider priorities

Consider 'campaign', 'slogan' or 'identification' of the 4 town efforts/entity

Review and consideration of next steps to be taken in December/January

Team Stakeholder and Committee list

Other businesses

Next meeting date, time, agenda items

Adjournment

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEMBER TOWN TEAM MEETING NOTES

DECEMBER 16, 2020 – via Zoom

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Welcome –

Meeting attendees were welcomed to the meeting between the 4 towns who have worked together to prepare the 4 Town Regional Economic Vitality Plan. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

Memorandum of Understanding –

The MOU has been adopted by the governing bodies of each town.

Steering Committee Officers –

The following individuals have been appointed as members:

: Bolton – pending – Josh Kelly, Kyleen Mike, and Patrice Carson continue as staff representatives

: Coventry – pending – Eric Trott, Wendy Rubin, and Erica Pagliuco continue as staff representatives

: Mansfield – Ryan Aylesworth, Cynthia VanZelm, Cara Workman

: Tolland – Mike Rosen, Caitlin Gordon, Jim Hutton

Campaign/slogan/identification of 4 Town Vitality Plan –

Eric introduced Tim Liptrap, who is a member of the Coventry Economic Development Commission and is a Professor at Nichols College. Tim introduced himself and gave a brief indication of his work and educational experience relative to branding and marketing.

Each town gave an indication of where they stand on branding efforts:

Bolton – Is in the process of identifying a municipal brand. Their town logo has served in that function over the years.

Mansfield – Two years ago a positioning plan and tagline was prepared for the Town – ‘Your Place to Grow’. The Downtown Partnership has a separate brand of ‘Eat – Explore – Enjoy’.

Tolland – Has not pursued a branding effort.

Coventry – Has not pursued a branding effort. The Town has two logos that it has used for various purposes - the Nathan Hale logo and a graphic that was prepared for the Police Department several years ago. The Land Use Office also has a unique logo.

A brief review was provided on the ‘campaign’ that was part of the AdvanceCT work. Each town agreed that the process was useful, but did not illicit anything that everyone could agree on.

Tim indicated that he would be willing to create a case study/contest with Nichols College students he works with and potentially others to build a campaign/tag line/logo that reflects the consistent themes between the 4 towns. Mock ups will be provided during the next college semester which starts in January with results provided by the end of the semester. Those in attendance were very appreciative of this offer of assistance and were in full agreement to pursue it.

Tim also provided some details on a new department/course of study that is being created at Nichols College relative to ‘digital nomads’. The program will be supporting and building employees in the digital workplace.

Implementation matrix – consider priorities –

4 Town event calendar

Numerous ideas were discussed at the previous meetings for which action items should be pursued as a priority project. The three most viable candidates that have been agreed upon are: the development of a logo/campaign which is in progress with the assistance of Tim Liptrap and Nichols College, the creation of 4 town event calendar platform, and preparing asset inventories of each of the member towns.

Olivia, the Coventry Town Manager's intern, researched options of possible event calendar platforms, which includes: Microsoft 365, Google Calendar, iCalendar. Details on her research were shared and briefly discussed.

Diane from the Windham Chamber provided some insight on her experience with an event calendar as well as SECTOR's (Southeastern CT Council of Governments) shared calendar, which is a Wordpress platform.

There are many considerations that need to be carefully evaluated with shared calendars, such as: posting policies, management, and method of conveying materials.

Wendy Rubin, Coventry Parks and Recreation Director, shared her experience with the development of a shared calendar system called '06238'. She indicated that it was a great effort, but the platform did not reach the popularity and usage that was anticipated, largely due to the fact that it was not very mobile-friendly.

It was agreed to further consider the Google and Microsoft platforms.

Asset inventory

The development of an asset inventory was viewed as another viable option for a priority project. This could be a relatively simple task for each town. It will also serve as an important piece in the future as efforts are underway to market the region in a collaborative fashion. The information that would be incorporated into the asset inventory should be readily available from existing resources such as Plans of Conservation and Development, business directories, Town marketing, and other informational resources.

The development of a Google shared document to collect the resources submitted by each town was viewed as the best way to manage the information. In the meantime, each town was asked to begin preparing simple lists of resources that could be included with the inventory.

Next steps –

The following are the next steps that will occur up to the scheduled meeting next month: team members will continue to find interested stakeholders to invite to the group, the campaign development project will begin to be planned by Tim Liptrap, and simple lists of asset inventory items will be prepared by each town.

Other business –

None.

Next meeting date, time, agenda items -

A day during the week of January 11 will be selected and be shared with the attendees.

Agenda items that were on the December agenda will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment –

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.