



TOWN OF SMITHSBURG

Economic Development Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 25, 2024

Town Hall – 1st floor conference room/council chambers

Commissioners in attendance: Liz Farmer Bedard, Chair (via phone); Jamie Fogle, Vice-Chair; Cathie McCormick, Secretary/Bookkeeper; Michael Schwartz, Town-Council Liaison; Guitson Louis, EDC Coordinator; Amber Dwyer, Ben Rodriguez,

Commissioners absent: Dawn McKinnon

Sub-committee member in attendance: Dennis Sickmen

Public present: Al Annunziata, owner of *No Limit Custom Rims and Tires*

Meeting was called to order at 7:22 p.m. by Vice Chair Jamie Fogle

Rodriguez moved to accept the agenda as published; McCormick seconded; motion carried.
Rodriguez moved to accept June minutes; Dwyer seconded; motion carried.

Chair's Report

Bedard (via phone) reported that she is following up with town officials on the vendor registration fee reimbursement for Upper Stem Brewery. Because of the change away from the designation of Farmer's Markets, Upper Stem is unable to attend Third in the Burg events. The request for reimbursing their vendor fee was made over a month ago but has not yet been received by Upper Stem. Louis agreed to follow up with town manager Brandt.

Bookkeeper's Report

McCormick reported the following financial information:

July 20 Third in the Burg Car Show Financial Report.

Revenue: \$ 962.

Car Show participant registrations: \$ 640.

Vendor/food truck registrations: \$ 150.

EDC Merchandise sales \$ 172.

Expenses: \$ 825.

Supplies/promotional materials: \$ 51.

Professional Services (toilets): \$ 289.

Trophies/prizes: \$ 235.

Entertainment: \$250.

Net: \$137.

Coordinators Report

Louis reported: Since starting in his position as EDC Coordinator on July 1, he has created a database of town businesses, designed and distributed informational postcards on the town, researched grant opportunities, and started work on a small business workshop to be held in the coming months. He assisted in the operations of the July 20 Car Show. His primary purpose is to support the existing businesses in the downtown core and to attract new businesses to the area.

Sub-Committee Reports

1. *Events and Promotions:* Fogle reported on a radio ad she created through a program with 96.7 to help drive attendance to Third in the Burg events. It is an advertising program that cost her \$895/month for two months. The 30-second ad will run 150 times and mentions both the Artist's Palette Salon and Gallery and the Third in the Burg events. A discussion about the cost and benefit of advertising continued, with the suggestion that the EDC create a way to gather information during events on how audience members learned about it. This information could help drive future advertising investments. Dwyer suggested a QR code leading to an online survey. McCormick will follow up on the creation of the survey.
2. *Public Relations:* Bedard reported some progress with the Website. Munibit has adjusted the site so that the blog appears on the page itself rather than in a pop up. We are still struggling with the inability to accept vendor payments on the Munibit site. There does not seem to be a way for them to add a button, but it might be possible for a hyperlink to a PayPal account. Facebook ads for events seem to be working quite well, and the sub-committee will continue to run ads 20 days before events. Louis will work with Bedard on the online payments for vendor registrations.
3. *Business Development:* McKinnon sent an updated draft of a sponsorship document via email prior to the meeting. Rodriguez has experience with sponsorships and added that the sponsorship document should be the back page for each event, and that sponsorships should be driven by the overall cost of the event. He believes sponsorships only work for larger events. The current document is a good start for seeking sponsors for next year's events/activities.
4. *Arts and Culture:* McCormick reports that the library has reached out with an idea for an art display. She will follow up with them. The public art/mural planning has been sidelined because of the pressure of the Third in the Burg events. Fogle added that additional sub-committee members are needed to move the process forward.

Public Comment

No public comment

Old Business

1. *July Car Show Recap: (McCormick)* There were 23 cars pre-registered for the car show, but with same-day registrations the paid registration number reached 64 (\$640) with several more cars displayed but not formally registered. Once all spaces on Railroad Lane were full, the show cars lined up on the North side of Maple Avenue. Five Boy Scout Troop 14 volunteers were active assistants during set up and tear down of the event. The event was well attended, and both participants, vendors, and audience members reported having a good time. Trackside Kitchen reported to Councilman Schwartz that they did

2.5 times their normal business during the car show. McCormick suggested seeking information from other restaurants such as Dixie, Vince's and Wolfe's Den to see if their revenue increased on the day of the event as well. Louis will follow up with them during his planned visits. There were multiple suggestions for improvements for next year's event during the meeting. Logistically, being prepared for the number of participants will be important. Schwartz suggested blocking off W. Water Street and the South side Main Street rather than using Maple Avenue. He also expressed a concern that food trucks take away from local restaurants' sales, while Rodriguez and Fogle added that food trucks are a draw for the audience. McCormick added that food trucks run by residents of Smithsburg could be scheduled. Louis suggested that local restaurants could participate in the events using a hot cart, and that he would research that possibility and raise it with local restaurant owners. A wider discussion of ways to increase local business success continued including increasing bus service. Schwartz suggested a 50/50 or other type of raffle for future events. He will check with the town attorney on the legality of holding raffles.

2. *Merchandise Orders:* Third in the Burg t-shirt sales have been brisk. McCormick moved that an additional order of Third in the Burg t-shirts be ordered in addition to some XXL shirts, which have been frequently requested. Dwyer seconded. **Motion carried.** The supply of McCutcheon's jams and preserves was just restocked and should be sufficient for the rest of the events this season.
3. *August 17 Dog Show update/planning:* the dog show will be held at Veterans Park rather than Railroad Lane since a grassy surface will provide a more dog-friendly venue. There are two performances in the works: Aspire K9 Academy has been asked to have their dogs perform, and K9 Trainer Nick Russo will demonstrate his dogs' smell seeking abilities. Louis, McCormick, and Bedard will meet on July 25 to do further logistical planning for the event. The Humane Society is planning to attend. Once the program is complete, advertising for the event will proceed. McKinnon (as reported in a prior email) has ordered the Dog Days banner for placement with our Third in the Burg banner. They should be in place by the beginning of August. Fogle offered a shade tent for the dog performers.
4. *Cinnamon Bun Fun Run (Sept. 21) update:* Rodriguez reports that runner registrations are low at this point. Last year 225 runners participated. At this point, there are only 34 runners registered for this year. He believes the decrease is due to multiple popular running events happening on the same day. However, sponsorship funds have increased over last year. He does anticipate 20% less in overall revenue. Rodriguez asked that we send him ideas of groups that could be invited to run or walk. Bedard recommended a push in Facebook ads with a focus on the runner registration deadline, which is 30 days from now. The event will also be added to the Visit Smithsburg site (Bedard) and the Visit Hagerstown site (Louis).
5. *Ciderfest (Oct. 19) update:* McCormick reported that The Fabulous Hub Caps had verbally agreed to perform during the event. A contract was due to be sent to town hall by their manager. Louis will follow up on the status of that contract. So far, the plan is to

have the band with the back of their tent to be lined up with Main Street with a beer garden set up in front of the Wolfe's Den. Water Street would be closed from C & P Lane to Main Street as it was for the April TAPEstry event. There was some discussion of changing that layout to include half of Main Street so that other restaurants could have outdoor dining. Fogle suggested having tables and chairs on Water Street so that audience members could sit, eat, and listen to the band. McCormick recommended inviting all downtown businesses to have an open house with snacks or activities in their buildings. In case the weather is cool, portable propane heaters could be rented for the outdoor seating area and in the band's tent. Schwartz suggested checking the Smithsburg Athletic schedule to be sure we are not competing with those events and/or closing roads needed for those events.

New Business

1. *Resignation:* Commissioner Ben Rodriguez formally announced his resignation from the EDC. He spoke with Chair Bedard last week. He will remain on the Commission until after the Cinnamon Bun Fun Run. In his email to the Commissioners, he announced that his second son is expected in December, and he wants to focus his attention on family. We will miss him. Best of luck and congratulations, Ben!
2. *National Night Out:* Dwyer suggested the EDC have a presence during National Night Out which is August 6. The EDC has a special meeting scheduled for that evening to plan for the Main Street Maryland presentation. No decision was made concerning the rescheduling of the meeting to allow for the EDC to set up their tent in Veteran's Park.
3. *EDC member recruitment:* Dwyer suggested that it is important that we recruit new members for the EDC, and that one way to accomplish this would be a call in the water/sewer bill mailing.

McCormick motioned to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. Rodriguez seconded. **Motion carried.**

Next meeting: August 22, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the conference room/council chambers of town hall.