LEDC
Lamoille Economic Development Corporation

*Your Partner in Growing the Future.*

# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – 10/20/23

***Location:*** Zoom Meeting Online
***Directors Attending in Person:*** None
***Directors Attending Remotely:*** Jeremy Elliott, Geoff Lindemer, Conrad Harris, Mark Vandenberg, Dody Day, Michelle Whitmore, Erik Remmers
***Directors Excused:*** Tina Norton, Greg Tatro
***Also Attending:*** LEDC Executive Director Pat Ripley, LCPC Director Tasha Wallis

ED Pat Ripley called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Friday October 20th. The board began the meeting by reviewing minutes from the September meeting. Geoff Lindemer motioned to approve the minutes and Conrad Harris seconded that motion. The motion was passed with one abstention from Mark Vandenberg.

The group then heard from Lamoille County Planning Commission Director Tasha Wallis who provided updates on various topics. She said the added parking and beautification work in Smugglers Notch is now complete. Unfortunately, some of the plantings that had been installed as part of the project were stolen. There is a plan in place to replace the stolen plants. She also explained that the Town of Stowe is currently conducting a traffic study to determine ways to ease congestion on roadways in Stowe. Traffic problems on the mountain road and in the village of Stowe have become more troublesome in recent years and the board discussed how the traffic data will be used, as well as some of the already completed projects in Stowe meant to ease congestion. Tasha also explained that the project to install charettes at the base of the notch road through Smugglers Notch to stop large trucks from entering the notch has been finalized and will be installed in the spring. This has long been an issue for Lamoille County with many trucks being stuck in the notch blocking traffic. Tasha also discussed potential opportunities for LEDC and LCPC to collaborate on upcoming grant opportunities.

The group then heard from Vermont State University – Johnson Campus Dean of Students Michelle Whitmore. She updated the group regarding the incoming Interim President David Bergh, who had served as a dean at the Johnson campus for 20 years prior to leaving the role for other opportunities. He will return to Vermont from his role as president at now-defunct Cazenovia University to lead Vermont State University on a temporary basis as it transitions from a multi-institution model to a centralized approach. Michelle also spoke about recent announcements that the University will be removing programs and faculty as part of the consolidation process. She explained that the University will go from 77 programs to 30 programs as part of this consolidation with 11% of programs fully closed and others combined with existing programs. Some of the programs remaining at Johnson are teaching, psychology, studio arts and environmental science, she said, adding that a new nursing program is also in the works at the Johnson campus. The nursing program will open in fall 2025 with a goal of 100 students enrolled in that program, she said. Michelle also explained the school administration is now being looked at for additional cuts.

The group then turned its attention to the September financial reports. Mark Vandenberg motioned to approve the financial reports and Geoff Lindemer seconded that motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The group then discussed the recent LEDC Annual Luncheon, held at Jenna's Promise in Johnson. There was agreement that the event went well with good attendance. LEDC ED Pat Ripley mentioned that a key part of the event is getting a good speaker and that the board should be on the lookout for a good speaker for next year's event. He also requested thoughts on how to improve the event. Jeremy Elliot mentioned that it would be a good idea to have an LEDC member speak briefly about how being an LEDC member has benefited their business. It was agreed this should be added to next year's Annual Luncheon.

LEDC ED Pat Ripley then provided updates on some recent grant awards, including two BGS grants that were awarded to two Lamoille County businesses that LEDC will administer, as well as an NBRC grant that was awarded to the Town of Johnson to help build a light industrial park. LEDC will also administer that grant.

LEDC ED Pat Ripley also mentioned to the board that another person has expressed interest in joining the board of directors but added that the individual is not a business owner. LEDC ED Pat Ripley mentioned that in the past the board has expressed interest in adding business owners, but the board members who were present expressed interest in adding the individual to the board despite that previously stated goal. A formal request has not been submitted by the individual, but the board agreed to consider the matter further at a future meeting after all board members had a chance to weigh in. The board also expressed an interest in adding a board member from the hospitality sector, as well as from one of the local ski resorts. LEDC ED Pat Ripley added that there are currently two open sports on the LEDC Board of Directors.

LEDC ED Pat Ripley then provided an update on federal flood assistance programs, most of which wrap up at the end of October. He also provided an update on the fall workshop schedule, which runs through November. A legislative event has been scheduled in November to preview the FY24 legislative session. There was also brief mention of the 2024 Legislative Breakfasts, which start in January and run through April.

There were no questions regarding LEDC ED Pat Ripley's monthly report. There were also no questions regarding Elisa Clancy's report.

The meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.