

Welcome Wagon

1/4/2023

Present: Mayor Mark Drnek, Kathy Varadi, Lisa Pindar (Keller Williams), Marti Swords-Horrell (First United Methodist), Marcela Micucci (GOHS), David Kropp (DO), Luisa Montanti, Bill Thomas, Todd Collins

Introductions

Acceptance of Minutes - approved by acclamation.

Discussion:

Mayor Drnek spoke regarding the purpose and vision of the group - 1,000 employed people and “trailing spouses” who want to live in the City. Need jobs, housing. We’re working on it. Change from “investors” to full-time residents.

Our goal is to create value for self-identification to find out - Who are they? Why did they move here? Where did they move to? and When did they move in?

- Assignment Reports:

Bill - connect people with Hartwick. Contacted Ryan Butler, Major Events Coordinator about forthcoming (monthly?) events happening at Hartwick.

Todd - contacted Doug Kendall about the Yager. Could we have Welcome Wagon events there to bolster their attendance and provide a great cultural experience for our newcomers?

Kathy - SUNY, contacted Linda Drake and recruited her for the WW. Suggested Alex Douglass as a Hartwick contact.

David - Spoke about the existing DO calendar on their website. Kathy asked about people who aren’t connected digitally.

Luisa - created the contact list - shared list of emails.

Additional Discussion:

Marcela - Spoke about the existing resources for event promotion, and the challenges that still exist beyond informing them - that capturing them is a whole different story. Offered History Center as an event location.

Group discussion about bringing people downtown through coordinated, consistent events in Muller Plaza.

Luisa brought up homelessness, and the deterrent effect on downtown. There was some group discussion on how we can address this, which communities are doing this work well, and who stakeholders might be that could be included. Caring for the Homeless Coalition was mentioned by name.

Luisa brought up her experience on the ZBA and the over-saturation of rental properties which causes a pinch on properties for full-time residents, rental or owning.

Group is curious about % of houses listed as rental-occupancy, Special Use Permits or otherwise. Can we institute a cap?

The Mayor spoke about work that is being done to address these concerns.

Kathy suggested addressing bigger issues before attempting to put together any promotional materials.

Kathy shared a new idea about a column in the Daily Star by the welcome wagon and how that could be used to further the mission of the committee.

Lisa spoke from her perspective about emphasizing our digital presence because prospective residents are totally mining the internet to get a feel for our community

Next Time:

1. Continue talking about housing and the homeless population, and the implications it will have on the WW.
2. Todd offered to provide his perspective as a new resident, and his experience in Bennington, VT and Hoosick Falls, NY.

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3. Discuss technology and digital presence, specifically video content.
 4. Some people have homework.

Next meeting 2/15/2023 at 5pm, Mayor's Conference Room