

Eco Tourism Committee  
Minutes  
12/18/2023

Present: Susan Connell, Jean Green, Susan Downing, Vicktoria Hawks , Richy Bisk, Phil Gott, Emily Glaubitz, Kerrie Salwa, Gabe Trevor. Sherry Patch was present for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Election of Officers: A brief discussion was held and the following officers were elected.

Susan Connell, Chairperson

Jean Green, Vice-Chairperson

Susan Downing,. Recording Secretary

Stakeholder Identification: Considerable discussion generated the following list of organizations and public businesses which could be considered stakeholders for the purposes of this committee. Additional, less public businesses, may be added to this list and potentially other groups. The town clerk has a listing of all businesses in town and this list will be accessed and reviewed.

The Barn

Mountainside Cafe

Princeton House of Pizza

Kwik Stop

Monti's

Captain Bob's

The Thirsty Lab

Hunt and Gather

Rattleroot Farm

Kate's Powerhouse Yoga

Yoga @ the Congregational Church

Cornerstone Ranch

NEADS

Mass Audubon, Wachusett Meadow

Norco Gun Club

Princeton Land Trust

Leominster State Forest

Wachusett Mountain State Recreation Area

## Townline Garage

A goal of eco tourism was seen as benefiting businesses here in town as well as increasing the tax base for the Town of Princeton. The increase in tax revenues would need to exceed the cost/expenses to the town of the increased number of people, traffic, emergency services and so on that are likely to arise for the town.

A major question of discussion was how to engage people who already come to Princeton for recreation to stay, eat, spend money and support businesses in town. Possible actions that may facilitate increased eco-tourism commerce in Princeton and/or barriers were discussed including:

- Would businesses in town like to create a Chamber of Commerce?
- Creating a brochure regarding businesses as well as places to hike, bike, ski, kayak, fish
- Create link on Airbnb to local businesses
- Create a map of businesses (especially an interactive map) also linking to biking routes, hiking trailheads, horse stables, ski area
- Why are the number of businesses in town so limited and/or hours of those businesses limited?
- Are there barriers to a sporting goods store here in town?
- The need for marketing/advertising (such as in Johnny Appleseed brochure that comes out a few times/year)

An extended discussion regarding Mechanics Hall in East Princeton took place. We reviewed the history of the building, especially the more recent efforts to get parties interested in repairing and developing a business in the building. Phil Gott reported that an RFP would come out within the next month from the Selectboard to try to spur this repair/development process again. This building was seen as a potentially great site for another business or businesses. In addition, the adjacent property where Townline Garage and Kwik Stop are located was discussed, as it might, in the future, open more options for business development of Mechanics Hall or additional businesses.

## Asset Mapping:

Gabe presented large and small zoning maps of Princeton. Areas of current commercial development were identified. Areas for potential business development were discussed along with review of town owned land, residential

areas and the extensive amount of conserved land. Some of the assets such as Wachusett Mountain, Leominster State Forest, Paradise Pond, Wachusett Meadow Audubon Sanctuary, the MidState Trail, Savage Hill Wildlife Management area were identified. Additional trail areas could be identified via the Open Space Committee pages on the Town of Princeton Website.

Next Meeting: January 22, 2024 at 9am in the Town Hall Annex