

Zoom Meeting Re-cap

Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Time: 12 noon

Attendees: K. Bielmeier (co-chair), Justin Bette, Tim Baldwin, Tom Marks, and Rob LaBonne

Recording: <https://youtu.be/tqmav4NGkLY>

Co-Chair Report:

- Participated in the “Region 5 Jobs & Business Subcommittee” zoom call.
- Q: Will there be funding coming from the State of CT?
- John Field, DEHMS R-5, said there are FEMA funds and they are applicable to schools and nonprofits. The other funding stream is through OPM; they administer CARES ACT funds. OPM originally said that the CARES ACT funds were going to cover whatever FEMA could not. But now the need or the gap is wider than the CARES ACT can fill. Municipalities are good at accessing FEMA funds and FEMA does a good job of being clear on how to go after them. Not so on the OPM side, which offers very little guidance. The CT legislature resumes on 9/21.

Restaurants – as we move inside – larger ones have an easier time of handling the 6’ distances and occupancy restrictions

- Labor – previously just kitchen staff; now it is also servers, as college is open
- Careful not to let down our guard. Both the establishments and the customers.
- Survey – next step
- Governor Lamont’s fines
- Quarantine from different states – Airports
- UVC Light to eliminate Covid-19
- Ozone generator – CT Dept. Health DPH “frowns on them” STS looked into them (Tim) (action step)

Community Member Reports:

Tom Marks: One of the major initiatives of the United Way is the **ALICE** (asset limited income constrained employed) report. It is done every two years, and is broken down state-by-state, town-by-town, giving you a snapshot into what people are dealing with. Two takeaways from this report are: it contains language that people are disproportionately affected by disasters, natural and, including, pandemics. About 6% of households in Southbury are below the poverty line. I was able to get the town-by-town data from the Western CT United Way. 30% of the

homes in Southbury in 2018 were below the ALICE threshold. 29% in 2019. So one-third of households in Southbury are having trouble making ends meet, despite having a job. We tend to think of Southbury as an affluent town, but we must be sensitive to the fact that there is a large part of our population that struggles to meet its expenses.

Secondly, our businesses, especially restaurants, are affected by the headlines, as well as the conditions of the pandemic. Perception is nearly as important as reality.

Kevin: The Town is going to conduct a series of videos that we hope becomes picked up by others doing their own that show people out and about enjoying a meal indoors, to counter the fear factor about visiting restaurants and other establishments.

The health department is strongly encouraging getting flu shots and should be championed by the LTRC.

Rob LaBonne: What is our main focus to this committee? Where do we go from here?

Kevin: To help us determine what our first steps are to be is the Intel that we are trying to gain. Our survey coming may help. We need to also learn who may offer their professional services pro bono and then offer up a list on our website. We are feeling our way at this moment.

Tim Baldwin: 1) Re: restaurants, would it be beneficial to help them get through the winter by getting land use, building and fire together on this? Heaters will be coming out; requests will be coming in.

2) Our **healthcare industry:** How are they doing? What are their shortcomings? PPE is no longer being sent out by the municipality? Is there an assessment?

3) How about **daycare** capacity? Do we put together a sub-committee that focuses on this sector? Could we coordinate to put pressure on State to solve the problem? ie. Bradley Airport

4) **Pharmacies** and **grocery stores:** Are they able to keep up with the demand?

5) Our **fitness centers?** How are they doing?

Kevin: 1) We are working on the outdoor extension support for restaurants internally.

2) Let's check with our local healthcare businesses and see how they're doing.

3) PPE and IR thermometers remain an opportunity to continue to provide by the municipality, if there is way for us to do it. We are also sharing local providers of all the necessary safety products, such as PPE, shields, hand-santizer, etc.

4) Daycare's are challenged by capacity. The mandate of 50% makes it untenable for some to turn a profit. If daycare's have a collective organization perhaps we can join them and help lobby the State for support.

5) Grocery stores, an essential part of our business community, have stayed strong throughout the pandemic.

6) Pharmacies have benefitted from the fact they have drive-thru's. This speaks to why other commercial establishments could also benefit from having a drive-thru.

Justin: The Senior Commission is meeting for the first-time since February, so I will have more of an update at our next meeting.

ACTION STEPS:

- Try and make our restaurants outdoor options with municipality easier
- Reach out to fitness centers
- Reach out to daycare centers
- Try sourcing more PPE, etc. for free distribution by the town
- Prepare for our next meeting
- Adjourned at 12:45pm
- Next meeting: Tuesday, October 6 at 12 noon. Joining us will be: Steve Schnell, new Emergency Management Director for the Town of Southbury.