

COVID-19 ECONOMIC STABILIZATION TEAM

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 16, 2020

Location: Online ZOOM

Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm

City Council Members Present:

Susan Warner, Joe Clark, Vice Mayor Brittney Cannamore

Affiliates:

Leah Okin-Magowan, Gustavus Visitors Association (GVA)

Participants:

Ben DeBoer, Emma Johnson, Brenna McLaughlin, Erin Olson, Cheryl Smith, Aimee Youmans. (Late arrivals on phone – Josh and Cristina Graves)

Introduction: This was the first in a series of informal conversations among Gustavus Community members on how to go about stabilizing our local economy and providing for the long-term recovery from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 virus. How can we become more self-reliant and less dependent on Federal handouts, while still preserving our traditional, small town values? How can we help local businesses generate the retail taxes to underwrite the cost of services the Gustavus people want to have available? The present focus is on four \$Million dollar/per year (or more) in cash-sales industries over the next 3 years.

Agenda Items:

1. Rejuvenate our Visitor Industry
2. Reinvigorate our Local Businesses
3. Elevate our Local Food Production capacity
4. Develop Gustavus as a Science, Learning, and Leadership conferencing & workshop destination

Discussion:

At this first meeting, the discussion tended to link together items 1 and 4 under the concept of Destination Marketing. Gustavus Visitor Association President, Leah Okin, presented an update of the GVA marketing activities planned and underway and there were numerous suggestions from participants on lengthening duration of stay and packaging trips. The Food Production item will have to wait for interested participants to attend.

Action Items

1. Warner, (2) Send invite and introduction to new Sunnyside Market owner Lance Danielson
2. Warner, (4) Send invite Sarah Doyle, new trails in National Park, by May 20th
3. Warner, (2-4) Send invites for additional items 2, 3, and 4 participants by May 20th

4. Clark, send written marketing suggestions to Okin to scan and send to Warner, by May 20th
5. Okin, (4) suggest Gustavus for retreats –entry on GVA web site, by May 20th
6. Cannamore, work with Brenna McLaughlin to develop concept for a post-Folk Fest festival, by May 20th.

Other Notes

Numerous ideas were suggested for additional activities to encourage visitors to stay an extra day or two or extend shoulder season visiting, including encouraging a pro-visitor culture, better transportation from the Park to Gustavus (bus circuit?), making childcare available, and additional Gustavus activities such as a Living History Day, can/clean fish, Tlingit weaving, knitting in nature, Strawberry Point days, fishing derby, RVs, skiing, snowmobiling, and birders in the spring. Mr. Clark suggested decreasing the 20% commission the Park requires on Gustavus activities sold at the Park. Ms. McLaughlin stated that Bob Chase would like to do another demolition derby. (Don't know if that event generated retail tax?).

Audio recording available, m4a format, content starts 40 mins in, password: 0N%4?%R!

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/69Ztl7vJsVILS7fx9W_RLMLN4H9T6a8gScX_AKnU5B5VFW3wqZ_YFd5vJ8ouNf

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 21, 2020 7:00 – 8:00 PM