

4 TOWN REGIONAL ECONOMIC VITALITY PLAN

MEETING NOTES – January 26, 2022

- Discussion with Missy Smith, Executive Director of the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce – how to expand the partnership between the Chamber and the 4 Town Economic Vitality effort
 - Cover the 13 towns of Tolland County
 - Working on finalizing their new website, including a new tab for each town with photos – add information about the 4 towns to the Chamber Website – they will share the new link with the group once it is online
 - Mission is to promote civic prosperity in their community – serves the entire county – they have an economic development committee with about ten of the thirteen towns that serves as a forum for discussing regional economic development issues. They also promote individual members. Wide social media following – up to 10k views on some posts, and advertisement of new chamber members to the public via social media. Also networking events, etc.
 - Chamber has similar regional focus, but a broader footprint
 - Chamber can share, market, promote visibility to businesses and provide a connection with the UCONN events, etc.
- Member towns financial commitment to 4 Town projects – status
 - We are chasing down a graduate student intern to help with task implementation, the four towns have all committed funds.
- Grant opportunities – American Rescue Plan – FEMA – Eastern Region Tourism District
 - Still waiting to hear on ARP funding from CRCOG
- UCONN – local business connections – intern assistance with 4 Town effort - potential projects – status

UCONN is hosting an event to help small business access resources at UCONN, starting with a virtual event the week of 2/21 to help businesses access interns and access current/post-grad students as employees. UCONN has a grant to talk to small businesses about technology-related

projects. Future sessions will deal with Greg Lewis's Small Business Development Center and project-based needs for communities (e.g. engaging a class to do research) – Tim Liptrap can help with the last one, he uses classes to help with projects for businesses.

- Visibility – Marketing – 4 Town Plan – web presence, other materials
- Request for Proposals preparation to obtain marketing consultant services
 - We are putting this together right now, figuring we have about \$8,000 to make this work and will get a request out soon
- Expanding partnerships – collaborations – invitations for future discussions –Windham Chamber (February meeting), UCONN Cooperative Extension Service (March meeting), other ideas
 - Windham chamber coming in February, UCONN extension in March
 - 1/27 – Northeast Region Roundtable for tourism
 - 2/15 – Outlook for Arts and Culture
- Review and consideration of next steps to be taken in 2022

Next meeting date, time, agenda items

2:00 PM on February 17th

Adjournment