

Economic Development Committee Minutes
Council Chambers
7/20/2017
4:30pm

Attendance

Committee Councilors:

Cody McEwen (Chair)

Mike Madore

Gilda Stratton

Councilors:

Joe Clark

Public:

Dan Nelson

Jessica Masse

Jaime Brundrett

Meeting called to order by Chair McEwen at 4:35pm.

Special Presentation: Jessica Masse - DesignLab

Subject: DesignLab, Town of Millinocket Web Services, Town of Millinocket Website Statistics

- DesignLab has been working with the town for over a year. Our business was to rebrand the town with a new tagline as well as logo; to enhance the towns web platform to meet the needs of the community and its visitors; and we acted as a media relations outlet for a number of events/activities surrounding the town.
- We repackaged the website to make it business friendly as well as create an easily accessible resource for information.
- The Katahdin Citizens Group Calendar is a great hub to connect the events going on in the Katahdin region and is being used.
- The website looks very nice and is easy to use.
- Communication is key and the website can be used as a platform to keep the community engaged. It can be used to keep the taxpayers up to date with current events and be used as a tool to make sure we don't reinvent the wheel; we can connect to the outside world.
- **Website Statistics (Past 90 days)**
 - 25,520 page views within the last three months
 - 9,587 sessions.
 - 7,026 users.
 - Average of 2.66 different page visits per session.
 - Average session duration of 2 minutes 9 seconds.
 - Bounce rate: (Leave website rate:) 48.29%
 - After the homepage, 66% of visitors explore other areas of the website. (Great statistic!)
 - Rank: (Percent of total visit within 90 days)
 - 1st - Homepage: 7,430 (29.11%)
 - 2nd - Explore: 1,382 (5.42%)

- 3rd - Assessor: 1,321 (5.18%)
- 4th - Public Notices: 1,121 (4.29%)
- 5th - Transfer Station: 679 (2.66%)
- 6th - Town Council: 632 (2.48%)
- 7th - Business: 587 (2.30%)
- 8th - Online Services: 565 (2.21%)
- 9th - Administrative: 457 (1.79%)
- 10th - Community Calendar: 448 (1.76%)

- **Comment**

- Madore - Anyone who finds any issues with the website: please get a hold of the town or DesignLab so that changes can be made.
- Madore - Our services with DesignLab have been excellent.
- Stratton - I encourage the site to be a resource for those looking to invest in our area.
- Jessica - There is a link to Our Katahdin investments on the town website that can provide investment opportunities to business looking to locate themselves here.
- Madore - We should be sure that we are cross referencing with the Chamber of Commerce. Are we connected other than with our Councilor Joe Clark being a liaison with the Chamber?
- Madore - The website could be a good place to foster that relationship.
- Jessica - The chamber has its own page with a business section that promotes economic development within the area. There is a link to the Chamber of Commerce in the business section of the town website.
- McEwen, Madore, Stratton - Thank you for the presentation. Very useful information.

Special Presentation: Jaime Brundrett - Chamber of Commerce

Subject: Status of the Chamber, Chamber Restructure, Events

- The Chamber of Commerce has been focusing on the National Park/Monument debate over the last handful of years. We feel as since this has mostly been settled at this point in time, we have started to look at the position of the chamber in the community.
- We have had a new slate of officers change over. In example I am the new President, John Hafford is the new Vice President, Cathy LeMay is the new Treasurer, as well as others who have stepped into leadership roles.
- We took some time in reviewing our bylaws to see how we could implement and adjust to a new operating standard.
- Most chambers across the state focus on promoting business in the economy and strengthening the health of its members. Looking to increase the return on investment of member contributions; to make sure our members are getting the best from our services.
- In more recent years, the chamber has acted as a volunteer and organization base to fill the town vacuum of economic downturn by managing community events. The Christmas Party, Trails End Festival, Fourth of July to give some examples. In our new goal to be more business oriented, we need to restructure and transition these events to other groups and/or reengage some of these events with the town without dropping the ball.
- We ask that those to contact the chamber and join to continue our progress. Increasing our membership will promote a good economic environment.
- We have recently hosted a Hospitality seminar which included speakers from New England Outdoor Center and Baxter State Park.

- The Chamber is looking to host more speakers in a speaker series.
- We are collaborating with DesignLab to upgrade our website.
- **Comment**
 - Madore - We are late on promoting this area. Recreational activities bring a quality of life to this area but the quality of life is what we need to focus on, not just the trails and monuments. Look to those who came for the Marathon and other activities we host. We need things in this town that will get people to stay here and for people to have things to do.
 - Jaime - The Chamber is branding for the quality of life in the region. We are going to try and focus on some easy quick fixes and will be looking toward long term changes that cover all facets of development.
 - Stratton - I am very glad to see you are refocusing and looking over your bylaws. We need these fresh faces to jumpstart the region. Quality of life is very important to us. Does the chamber promote private memberships like have been done in the past?
 - Jaime - We revamped the new membership/renewal package. We lowered our baseline fees, the going rate is now \$150 with our intention to focus on our members return on investment. For example: providing promotional materials, be added on our website and/or mobile app, be added to the snowmobile map. (Incremental add-ons but lowered the base price.
 - Stratton - individuals want to promote business on a general sense as well just to help out the chamber functions.
 - Jaime - Great point and this needs to be made public. We also opened the Trails End Festival to the public to try and break down barriers. We are moving forward on community building across the board, focusing on open communication.
 - Madore - How many communities do you serve?
 - Jaime - Six communities as well as unorganized territories. 60%70% comes from Millinocket, 10%-20% comes from East Millinocket and Medway. The rest comes from other outlying communities such as Shin Pond, Patten, and Sherman.
 - Jessica - There is a need for volunteers. An island fellow will be starting at the library as a volunteer coordinator. Contact Our Katahdin and Katahdin Revitalizaion.
 - Madore - This amazes me that we ask for volunteers and we constantly struggle to get them. Millinocket Mud Run had a lot of volunteers.
 - Jaime - It is tough to get volunteers. Usually they are needed for specific jobs when many say they will do something but don't want to take on a whole lot.
 - McEwen, Madore, Stratton - Thank you for the presentation. Very useful information.

Special Presentation: Cody McEwen - Town of Millinocket Survey

- Handouts of materials regarding social research in survey methods were distributed. There is a need to poll our community whether it be residents, business owners, or visitors to gather data on their perceptions of Millinocket as a whole as well as key topics of choice.
- This survey can be developed with citizens that want to provide input in topic and question generation.
- I encourage those who want to get involved to come to the Economic Development Committee meetings.
- **Comment**
 - Jessica - This is a great idea. This could work with the Katahdin Collaborative visioning process. It is a year/year and a half process to develop a vision for the future of our region.

- Jessica - Contact Lucy Van Hook for more information.
- Jaime - Has anyone looked into the CBZ report that was done a few years ago?
- Madore - Recalled that the survey and report had been done. The report didn't take well with the community.
- McEwen - There was some insightful information presented from the report and there has been some positive steps within the past few years. I will be reviewing those documents.
- Jessica - Citizens took some time in putting effort in that report. Hopefully we can gather some more useful information.
- Madore - With this, we can also look to make an impression with improving the signage in this community.
- Jessica - Grants may be available to help in this kind of improvement.

Committee adjourned at 5:35pm