

Starksboro Planning Commission  
Minutes of January 16, 2020  
Approved

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Present: Denny Casey, Denny Barnard, Rodney Orvis, Jeff Keeney  
Unable to attend: Dan Harris, Dan Nugent  
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Linnea Oosterman, Tom Fagan

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Dennis Casey at 7:10 p.m.

### Community Engagement – Linnea Oosterman, United Way

D. Casey opened the conversation by offering some background on Starksboro and some of the recent board discussions. Some of the topics include concerns about children and education and opportunities and socio-economic conditions that affect community and participation. In addition, Starksboro is a bedroom community without an active town center. The PC is wondering what they can do to help bring some energy into the town and foster growth and opportunities for younger folks.

Linnea Oosterman described the mission and goals of the new Emerging Leaders program. It was created by the United Way of Addison County and the AC Chamber of Commerce. The Emerging Leaders are trying to be part of the community. The group formed in the fall of 2019 and already has more than 100 members. They are “working to identify, develop and empower the next generation of philanthropic leaders through community service, leadership development, and fun networking opportunities.” Through social media, email lists, and the partnership with Chamber, the group is reaching a large audience. The Chamber has seen that to keep young professionals in the area, those people need to find community. The goal is to have people stay here in Addison County and to get involved in their communities. Part of the group’s work is volunteering back into the community, helping younger folks think about how to get involved at the local level whether that is in local government or serving on boards of nonprofits. The Emerging Leaders are also reaching out to young people through events such as the “Future Fair” at the Hannaford Career Center. They are also hosting “lunch and learn” sessions once a month. The goal is to go into communities and learn about the problems affecting the community such as mental health issues, affordable housing shortages, and helping to educate. In year two, they plan to delve deeper into a few topics and seek some solutions.

The Emerging Leaders program looks to host fun events that are also networking opportunities. They can help the PC think outside the box for events that could work in Starksboro. One possible idea is for the PC to help host a summer event at Cota field. It could incorporate a variety of activities to attract a wide range of folks.

The United Way also disburses grants on 3-year cycle in the areas of education, health and financial stability. They offer programs to help people with finances and establishing financial stability.

*Some ideas of local community activities that have been successful:*

Vergennes Day – held at the town park; vendors and food trucks; 5K race; Fire Dept has a fun pit  
Harvest Fest in Bristol – vendors, games, music, activities  
Lincoln’s Fire Dept BBQ  
Huntington Horseshoe League  
Monkton Mud Bog

Sugar on Snow in Starksboro last year was a bigger event and attracted more people. That could be built on for the future.

For a summer event, ideas include: activities at Cota field; inviting local farmers and artisans to have a booth at the Cota field pavilions; live music; games (Frisbee golf course, croquet, whiffle ball, dunk tank, horseshoes)

If people are bored and there's no activities or events to do in the community, they go elsewhere to find things. Various groups in Starksboro offer small events – how can the PC help get the word out and be helpful? What would the community like to see here?

Minutes of 1/2/20

**Motion:** Denny Barnard made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/2/20 as presented. Jeff Keeney second. **Motion carried.**

Current business

The board discussed topics that will be on the legislative calendar this session. The board will invite our local representatives to a PC meeting following town meeting. Consider end of March or first meeting in April.

On-farm ag related business survey

D. Casey asked Denny Barnard to respond to the survey that was sent by the State seeking feedback on the recent legislation regarding on-farm businesses and regulations.

**Motion to adjourn:** Jeff Keeney moved to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. Denny Barnard second.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder