

June 2021- Monthly Public Report  
Brian Doyle

All items listed below have been accomplished or are in progress

**Projects:**

**Web Page Development:**

Businesses are very busy at this time and not responding to my request for photos. Will schedule time for me to take these photos so they can be used on the town's website and FB page. Will continue to work with Sally Fuller to coordinate efforts.

**Spotlight on Excellence:**

Have asked three businesses to submit materials to me. Brooks Trapp Mill, Thomaston Grocery, Thomaston Place Auction Galleries. All are very busy and are not responding. Will reconnect with them in July.

**Thomaston Main Street: (TMS)**

Held two meetings in June to discuss the following ideas:

Ribbon Cutting day: Scheduled 7 ribbon cutting ceremonies with 5 Watts Block businesses and two others on Main Street. Photos were taken by Free Press Assistant Editor who agreed to use the images for a story. Will use photos for TMS FB page. Encouraged to contact Mike Curtis to schedule a time to be interviewed

Music Behind The Block: Making progress with identifying musicians to play during the month of August. Lindsey Pinkham has contacted several bands to see if we can begin locking in commitments. Many bands are not performing this year and some are not getting back to her. I've contacted two larger employers in town to see if they would like to sponsor this series. Flipside Café will be staffing a table to sell food at the concert. Trying to lock in a food truck as well. Have approached downtown merchants to see if they will sponsor "specials" the evenings of the concerts. Will encourage a local non-profit to staff a table and display their organization at each event. Have been encouraged to continue the series at Watts Hall later in the year.

Tommy The Moose: TMS committee has agreed to develop a Tommy The Moose contest later in the year. Jo Ann Hoppe of The Blueberry Moose will take the lead in working out the details

Zerbini Family Circus: Discussed having a scavenger hunt to attract people to the downtown during the time the circus is in town. Will finalize this decision at our 7/12 meeting.

Downtown Beautification: Town is considering using some TIF funds to keep the flower beds properly weeded and looking better. Receiving feedback that we need more color on Main Street and behind The Block. Many thanks for what has been done thus far by volunteers but concern expressed that more help is needed.

Art on Main Street: A variety of ideas have been raised that seek to attract artists to Thomaston. We expect to approach Maine Arts Commission for their next round of funds to add another mural on main street. Other ideas involve an Art Week that schedules artists to sell their work and maybe teach others. Additional effort needs to be invested and a point person to head this up. Spoke with local artist who creates outdoor sculptures, Jay Sawyer (J Bones), regarding his interest in creating a sculpture for Thomaston. He is very interested and offered to identify grant sources the town can pursue to pay for his art.

### **Broadband:**

Continue to participate in Zoom meetings on broadband hosted by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Maine Broadband Coalition. Attended a monthly meeting of the Mid-Coast Internet Coalition, (MIC) an entity seeking to develop a non-profit, community-owned, open access broadband organization.

Multiple emails and calls with MIC leadership ensued which has required a significant time investment on my part. Residents supported Article 34 at the Town Meeting which approved the Select Board to sign an interlocal agreement with MIC. Town attorney Paul Gibbons discouraged the Select Board from signing the Interlocal Agreement. MIC leadership completed the bylaws of the organization which addressed attorney Gibbon's concerns. The Select Board intends to sign the interlocal agreement and contribute financial support for the town's \*portion of a feasibility study.

Supported with information on broadband resources by Mia Purcell of CCFC. Ms. Purcell's knowledge on all things broadband is invaluable.

During the June MIC meeting, ISP OTELCO introduced themselves to the communities in attendance and expressed an interest in partnering with them to provide fiber to the home broadband service to their residents. OTELCO is investing in a fiber upgrade with Old Town, Orono and the University of Maine. Will learn more about OTELCO in the days ahead as competition for the state and federal funds is ramping up

Participated in a multi topic presentation of the Mid-Coast Internet Coalition to the Knox County Commissioners about the importance of broadband to the region. The presentation was well received and the Commissioners indicated they will need additional time to consider MIC's request for part of the ARP Act federal funds to be dedicated to MIC' broadband project.

### **Site Search:**

Learned that the health care practitioner seeking a space for her business canceled a meeting to view a property in town. I've sent her an email asking if we can be of further assistance or if she has made a decision to be located in another town.

Met with a Sadie Lajoie and her husband Jared a couple of times to discuss their Dance N Art business located at 161 Main Street. The timing of the business opening didn't allow Sadie and Jared to advertise their programs before many families had made their summer camp/childcare decisions. Reminded Sadie and Jared to contact Maine SBDC, SCORE or CEI to update their business plan in the hopes they can attract clients soon. Select Board Chair Diane Giese met with them during a ribbon cutting ceremony and suggested they consider teaching dance lessons as well.

Landlord Amy Morey introduced me to Brandie Simmons who is expected to move into 159 Main Street and open a smoothie business. Ms Simmons has been faced with some initial start-up challenges. Provided her with information to address a variety of common start-up needs. Encouraged her to schedule a time to meet with me to review her business plan so she can hopefully avoid any additional surprises. Ms. Simmons indicated she appreciated the information but wouldn't be scheduling a time to meet with me in the near term.

Contacted by landlord Tyler Hobbs who requested I speak with a prospective tenant Laurie Gold. Contacted Ms Gold and learned she's interested in opening a business that teaches boxing and fitness. She's operated a similar business before and believes she doesn't need my assistance at this time. Connected her to Bill Wasson CEO to discuss a time to arrange a site visit for an inspection. Forwarded Ms Gold the necessary paperwork to meet with the Planning Board.

### **Site visit:**

Toured Brooks Trapp Mill with Kara George, Town Manager, and Chris Rector of Senator King's Office. Followed up with an e-mail with multiple ideas for them to consider. Offered to assist with any next steps they wish to pursue.

**Placement of Lighted Crosswalk Signs on RT 1/Downtown:**

Sent another email to MDOT contacts requesting assistance with the application. No reply. Will reach out to DOT office to request some assistance with this matter.

**Marketing Open Retail /Commercial Locations:**

Have spoken to some landlords who are interested in posting information on available Retail/Commercial space for rent. Explained we are in the process of establishing a FB page for Thomaston Main Street and will be in touch once this is active.

**Dredging Project for St George River Channel:**

Made minor edits to the application and resubmitted it to the Army Corps. Have spoken to Mark Cutter from Army Corps and he indicated he'll be in touch with me to arrange an initial call to discuss the dredging project. Contacted by Senator Susan Collins' office offering to request some funds in a bill to pay for the feasibility study required as part of the project. Expressed our appreciation and submitted four letters in support of the dredging project to the Senator's Office.

**Lowe's 100 Hometown Grant:**

No word received yet on the status of the Lowe's Grant. I've checked their website and no updates are provided.

**Midcoast Economic Development District:**

Reviewed and made minor suggestions for changes to the questions that will be used for the Executive Director interviews. Participated in the initial and second tier of interviews. Participated in a follow up Zoom call with the Selection committee to discuss next steps. We hope to have this position filled in July.

**Thomaston Job Fair:**

Discussed the idea of Thomaston hosting a job fair with Town Manager Kara George. Ms. George was concerned that so many companies in Thomaston have open positions. Agreed to run with the project. Suggested we co-sponsor the event with the Rockland Career Center. Spoke with Career Center colleague David Grimes and agreed upon a date. Made initial contact with a newspaper, and printing firm to help promote the job fair. Alerted 30 businesses in town about the fair and requested they register if they were interested in participating. Due to feedback we received from businesses, a decision was made to postpone the event to a date later in August or September.

**Zoom Meetings/Meetings**

Weekly CCFC Staff and Loan Committee  
Weekly CCFC Technical Assistance Team  
Weekly call with CCFC Supervisor Mia Purcell  
Thomaston Select Board  
Thomaston Economic Development Committee  
Watts Block Trustees  
Mid-Coast Economic Development District Board of Directors  
Saco Main Street -Board of Trustees  
Saco Main Street -Business Vitality Committee  
Mid-Coast Internet Coalition  
Knox County Workforce Development Coalition  
Bi-Weekly meeting with Charlie Grover regarding ongoing economic development projects

**Follow up emails/conversations with:**

Jeff's Marine-Thomas Turansky	Lyman-Morse	Maine Marine Composites
GirtsResell Sports Enthusiast	Coastal Mountain Chiropractic	Doug's Seafood

Custom Coatings-Bob McCrea  
Tallie Foster-Trekkers  
Thomaston Grocery-John Vigue  
Jake Ward- U Maine  
Peggy Schaffer-ConnectME  
John Snyder-Waterfront Committee  
Bill Hahn  
Debra Hall/Matt Seigel- MIC  
Tom Peaco- Pen Bay Chamber

Lyman-Morse- Bob Armstrong  
Amy Morey -Landlord  
Supercuts  
Clayton Franklin-USCG  
Mia Purcell-CCFC  
Peter McCrea  
Charlie Grover  
Sandra Hoekstra

Eileen Miazga-Maine DOL  
Peter Lammert  
Rockland Ford  
  
Allison MacMillan-Highland Foods  
Julie Hashem-MCEDD  
Matt Graham- Lyman-Morse  
Jane Weintraub

**Introductory Calls/Emails**

Claudia Rossi

Laurie Gold

Brandi Sommers

**On site visits:**

Blueberry Moose

Epifanes

Flipside Café

Athen's Pizza

Coastal Mountain Chiropractic

Thomaston Market

Custom Coatings

Hoffman's

Spindrift Massage

Ross Levett Antiques

Dance N' Art Studio

Brooks Trap Mill