

March Monthly Report
Economic Development Specialist - Brian Doyle

1. Business Retention/Attraction

Business Retention:

Dance N Art Studio: At the request of Sadie LaJoie, I shared information about the defensive martial arts classes that will be offered by a trained instructor at their Main Street location to the local grade and middle school principals. Sadie and her husband Jared seek to diversify their revenue streams by providing a variety of after school programs for middle and grade school children.

Laura's Dolce Vitae Bakery: Spoke with Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) Mandy Everett about customer parking safety concerns and offered to discuss this issue with Chief Hoppe. Discussed signs that might be installed to direct customers where they can park. Followed up with Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) officials to request signs on RT 1. Learned of a MDOT statute that requires MDOT's intervention for permitting in high traffic locations that undergo a change of use. Informed Mandy Everett, Thomaston CEO, of this and she made plans to speak with MDOT officials and then meet with owner Ms. Christopher to review the project.

Coastal Cards: Stopped into Coastal Cards and continued my conversation with owner Ray Girtman about ways to increase his ability to display more products at his store. Encouraged him to check out other sports memorabilia stores' websites to observe how they use their space. Encouraged him to visit stores like Olympia Sports or Dick's Sporting Goods for ideas. Offered to stop by some retail locations in Old Orchard Beach and take some photos of displays he might find helpful.

Station 118: Spoke with owners Emily and Scott and asked if they would support a grant application to make improvements in Watts Hall. These improvements would allow Watts Hall to offer performances to attract more people to our downtown. Both agreed to this request. Will draft a letter for their review. Inquired if they would be interested in selling food at a Music Behind The Block event this summer. They agreed to this as well.

Thomaston Auction Galleries: Met with owner Kaja Veilleux and followed up on the issue of strategic planning assistance. Identified and electronically introduced Anne Lancaster, a Business Advisor with the Maine Small Business Development Center (Maine SBDC), to Mr. Veilleux. Ms. Lancaster has extensive experience providing this type of guidance to senior management and business owners. Sent Mr. Veilleux the link to register with Maine SBDC for this service and Ms. Lancaster also encouraged him to register in a follow up email.

Toured 495 Main Street property owned by Mr. Veilleux to learn about ideas he seeks to pursue there. Electronically introduced Mr. Veilleux to Thomaston CEO Mandy Everett and indicated she would enjoy meeting him to review Code requirements and allowable uses of the property. Explained the Planning Board is currently reviewing ideas to adapt ordinances that would allow different housing options in various parts of town.

1.Business Retention/Attraction (continued)

Cornhole Connection: Met with owners Penny and Cameo on site and was pleased their store continues to take shape as they acquire more inventory. Encouraged them to focus on creating their marketing plan. Reminded them Community Concepts Finance Corp colleague Sharon Gilseider is eager to assist them with this important task. Offered to provide them lists of local children's camps and hotels in the area so they can introduce themselves as a supplier of cornhole products. Spoke about how to display their products effectively and brainstormed some ideas. Encouraged them to contact their landlord with any questions that involve hanging boards or blocking a door to the basement. Encouraged them to walk around the downtown and introduce themselves to other merchants.

Flaura Flowers & Wine: Met with Aura at her store and was impressed with the design, attention to detail and quality of products offered. Assisted Aura with marketing her store through photos that were included in the April town e-newsletter. Informed CEO Mandy Everett that Aura is close to opening and Ms. Everett was able to visit with her on site.

Chambers Insurance Agency: Met with owner Mark Chambers and his son Mark to understand more about the family business and explain my role with the town. Learned the firm has expertise within the industry and discussion focused on ways to market their business through social media and volunteer opportunities. Made suggestions to Mr. Chambers that his firm can raise their local profile with volunteering on local boards and or sponsoring local events that his potential future clients will participate in. Will follow up with Mr. Chambers with these suggestions and make introductions if requested.

1.Business Attraction:

Confidential Site Searches:

Opportunity 1: No progress with receiving a response from a business seeking a space that addresses their expansion needs.

Opportunity 2: A second entrepreneur still has not made a decision on where he intends to relocate.

2. Watts Block

Improvement in HVAC system:

Learned of federal funds available via the Senate Congressional Direct Spending (CDS) and House Community Project Funding (CPF) programs. Spoke with Adam Lachman of Senator Kings' staff and was encouraged to apply for all three sources as the Appropriations Committee views an application more favorably if it is supported by multiple elected officials. The applications will be developed by Daryl Hahn, Diane Giese, Bill Hahn and Brian Doyle. They will request funds to make safety

2. Watts Block (continued)

improvements in the HVAC and air purification system that will allow Watts Hall to host larger events once again.

Parking Behind Watts Hall: Spoke with Watts Block merchants and made clear the expectations of parking two cars in one space behind Watts Block. After close review, learned specific parking spaces are longer and stressed that all vehicles must not extend past the corner of Watts Block.

Watts Hall Tour: Met with a local couple who will be renting Watts Hall for their wedding reception. Provided a tour and encouraged them to email Charlie Grover with their specific questions as he was unable to be present for this meeting. Indicated Mr. Grover would respond with answers to ensure their family celebration would be successful.

3. Enhance the Downtown Thomaston Experience

Thomaston Main Street (TMS): Facilitated a Meeting in March that attracted more participants. Discussed events the group wishes to focus on in 2022-2023. Suggestion was made to have a family centered event connected to Easter that will draw more people to the downtown. Networked with Amanda Shelmerdine who is overseeing the annual EMS sponsored egg hunt and she agreed to hand out flyers to participants about the event sponsored by First National Bank and Thomaston Main Street. The flyer marketing this event was a joint effort by Jessica Lecaptain, Sally Fuller and marketing staff with First National Bank. Nine businesses agreed to participate in this event scheduled for April 8-10.

Survey: Created a survey seeking to determine events residents are interested in for 2022-2023. Sent the survey to the downtown merchants and posted it in the monthly e-newsletter. Response has been slow. Will send it again over social media platforms.

FaceBook page: Secured additional support from Necole Janzcura and Lindsay Pinkham to serve as Administrators for the Thomaston Main Street FB page. Lindsay was able to log in as an Administrator but Necole has not. Worked with FB guru Jo Ann Hoppe and was able to provide Necole access.

Recruitment of new members: Ms. Hoppe successfully recruited Thomaston resident Missy Poulin to assist with the Thomaston Main Street FaceBook page. Necole Janzcura recruited John Usher, a colleague of hers from The First.

Music Behind The Block: Successfully received donations from Lyman-Morse and Epifanes NA. Lindsey Pinkham has offered to contact local food trucks to see if they will support these shows. Have a commitment from one Main Street business to serve food and another is considering it. Will begin booking entertainment soon to lock in the dates. Have a verbal commitment from Beaver Stinson to provide the stage once again. Thanks to Mr. Stinson!

3.Enhance the Downtown Thomaston Experience (continued)

Community discussion on Art in Thomaston: Confirmed a date to host an initial meeting on Wednesday, April 27, at 6:30 pm to discuss ways to integrate art into Thomaston. Will connect with local individuals interested in this issue prior to the 4/27 meeting to stimulate ideas prior to the meeting. Seeking an individual or two who have time to invest in the process. Communicated with local artist Nancy Baker who is very interested in this issue and she will attend this meeting.

Downtown Parking Updates: Requested a determination on who is responsible to pay for repairs to the wooden doors that allows access to dumpsters behind The Block. Town Manager Kara George indicated it is the entity that uses the dumpster who is responsible. Informed a landlord of this and he requested the contact information of the builder who constructed the door system to see if they can repair it. Will follow up with the landlord who requested this information.

Annual 4th of July Celebration: I met with Brooks Stevens to learn more about the plans and needs of this annual Thomaston tradition. Mr. Stevens outlined areas that the Fourth of July Committee needs help with. Followed through with specific tasks he requested but was cautioned by Town Manager Kara George about becoming overly involved

United Baptist Church: Met with Reverend Wayne Sawyer and learned of a fund called the Edward O'Brien Charity Fund that was set up by a local resident decades ago to support families in need. This fund was administered by a group of Thomaston men until the 1980s until they were no longer interested in administering it. Five full time Thomaston clergy were approached to take over the program. Only Rev. Jenks and Rev. Sawyer remain from the original group of fund administrators. Since both ministers are retiring soon, they are requesting that the town reconnect with the program. Currently the funds are in an account at Camden Savings Bank. Reverend Sawyer suggests the town find the charter for the Edward O'Brien Charity Fund. The Town should also look for Select Board minutes from the 1980s to indicate what action was taken and how much money was involved. Kara George has initiated a search for the charter and Select Board minutes.

Business Visits: Stopped by the following locations and met with owners/staff to listen to their feedback and needs and to discuss plans/ideas for the downtown.

Dance N' Art Studio	Thomaston Grocery	Coastal Mountain Chiro	Coastal Cards
Camden National Bank	Blueberry Moose	Station 118	Downeast Maritime
Athen's Pizza	Flipside Coffee	150 Main Salon	Strong Insurance
Cornhole Connection	Flaura Flowers & Wine	Ross Levitt Antiques	
Thomaston Auction Galleries			

4. Market Economic Development Specialist role and CCFC resources - Identify CCFC Technical Assistance resources that are available to the community

American Legion William Brazier Post: Contacted by American Legion leadership who expressed an interest in raising their profile in the region to help educate Veterans about the resources available to them. They indicated a desire to participate in the annual 4th of July celebration so I introduced them to Brooks Stevens the current chair of the event. The Legion also requested assistance with securing affordable internet service to their location. They want to use the internet to host informational sessions for other Maine Legions throughout the state about the resources available to their members. Unfortunately, they've not had any success at getting an affordable price to bring internet service to their location. Peggy Schaeffer, Executive Director of ConnectMaine Authority, informed me there aren't any federal funds dedicated to supporting the connectivity needs of American Legions across the country. I introduced the American Legion to a local Maine Internet Service Provider (ISP) and encouraged them to speak to them about their needs. The Legion also wants to educate Thomaston officials about the role it can play with supporting Veterans' needs. Will connect with Thomaston officials to ensure this conversation happens.

Shoreland Planning Grant: Created and submitted a planning grant for a paddle craft only ramp to be installed at the Kiln parcel. Received guidance on the project from the following people: Sandy Moore, Peter McCrea, Thomas Turansky and Mike Janzcure. Met with Peter McCrea, Engineers Bill Lane of Gartley and Dorsky and Ken Knauer from Prock Marine at the Kiln Parcel to review options to consider. Connected to multiple state and federal agencies to begin initial discussions about possible permits that may be needed. After robust discussion, the Select Board approved submitting the grant that requires a 25% match of \$1,750.

Lyman Morse: Reconnected to COO Matt Graham on multiple issues:

1. Will arrange a time to speak with The Maine Technology Institute's staff about the Prime Fund as an option to fund improvements in Lyman-Morse's manufacturing capacity. 2. Mr. Graham agreed to match funding provided last year for the 2022 Music Behind The Block series. 3. Mr. Graham was pleased to learn the Army Corp of Engineers would consider another Congressional Direct Spending request for FY23 of \$425,000 to support the dredging project in Thomaston Harbor. He agreed to submit a letter in support of this project. This funding is not guaranteed and will need to pass both the Senate and House and be signed by the President. Recommended additional discussion should also occur regarding expectations about the dredging project.

Job Fair in Thomaston: Spoke with CareerCenter staff inquiring if Thomaston would be willing to host a job fair targeting restaurant and lodging needs in the region. Contacted local restaurant and lodging businesses and learned the interest was minimal. Spoke with other local businesses outside of the hospitality sector and the response was minimal once again. Reconnected with CareerCenter staff indicating our interest level in Thomaston was just 2 businesses. Informed that the response in the region has been very modest. The CareerCenter staff will inform me if they plan to offer any job fairs locally.

4. Market Economic Development Specialist role and CCFC resources - Identify CCFC Technical Assistance resources that are available to the (continued)

Multi business visit: Continue to search for a day to invite all interested town, state and federal officials to visit three Thomaston-based businesses: Brooks Trapp Mill, Lyman-Morse Boatbuilding and Dragon Cement. Schedules are busy and we are looking into late May at this time.

Brooks Trap Mill: Met with Mark and Julie Brooks at their location and reviewed a potential schedule for the day with local, state and federal officials. Encouraged them to be prepared to tell their story so the attendees will understand the complexities of their family-owned business, their challenges and specific questions they wish to be addressed.

Shepard Toyota: Met with General Manager Susan Shepard at their Rt 1 location to learn about her third-generation family-owned business. Learned Shepard Toyota has a good connection with the Midcoast School of Technology (MST) and encouraged Ms. Shepard to speak with students at MST about full time careers at the dealerships. E-mailed MST Director Bobby Deetjen and informed him of Ms. Shepard's interest to connect with his students. Learned that workforce recruitment and training are an ongoing challenge and sent Ms. Shepard information about programs offered through the CareerCenter and the Maine Department of Labor. Made an email introduction to CareerCenter colleague David Grima who can assist with promoting job openings through the Maine Job Bank. Encouraged Ms. Shepard to contact Brooks Stevens should she be interested in participating in the annual 4th of July parade. Ms. Shepard indicated the dealership will be making some upgrades to both facilities. Indicated CCFC would be able to offer gap financing assistance should it be necessary to complete the projects.

Jeff's Marine: Scheduled a Zoom call with General Manager Thomas Turansky and Alex Thibodeau of Creative Composite Group of Augusta to discuss building a small skiff for Jeff's Marine. Jeff's used to annually sell several skiffs manufactured out of state that are no longer being made. Mr. Turansky is seeking a local manufacturer he can partner with to make skiffs that he can sell.

5. Provide the town with information on best practices involving use of social media and website.

6. TIF Program.

7. Meeting Attendance

Weekly call with Community Concepts Finance Corp Supervisor Mia Purcell
Bi-weekly meeting with Kara George
Bi-Weekly meeting with Nate Libby and Mia Purcell
Bi-weekly Thomaston Select Board
Monthly Thomaston Economic Development Committee
Monthly Watts Block Trustees

7. Meeting Attendance (continued)

Monthly Saco Main Street -Board of Trustees
Monthly Harbor Committee Meeting

8. Represent town at various events in the region

Monthly Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) meeting (Formerly Mid-Coast Economic Development District meeting)
Monthly Knox County Workforce Development Coalition
MCOG By-Laws Ad Hoc Committee.
Camden Rotary Zoom Meeting regarding workforce/affordable housing

9. Connectivity

Midcoast Internet Development Corporation (Formerly the Midcoast Internet Coalition): Continued efforts are being invested into finding internet service providers that are interested in collaborating with MIDC on its proposed municipal network. MIDC is also seeking investors for the necessary seed capital to build a proposed municipal network.

Consolidated Communications: Sent a second email to Sarah Davis, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, to determine if she would be interested in speaking with Kara George and me to educate us about Consolidated's plans for Thomaston.

10. ARPA Funds

11. Housing

Northern Boarder Regional Commission: Identified Norther Boarder Regional Commission (NBRC) funds as an option to finance the infrastructure needed for a proposed affordable housing development project in town. Confirmed with NRBC Program Director Andrea Smith that the funds could be applied for even though the land wasn't yet owned by the town.

Use of remaining CDGB funds to support housing needs in Thomaston: Scheduled a call with Town Manager Kara George and I with Deborah Johnson, Director of the Maine Office of Community Development, to review Thomaston's options for distributing funds remaining from a 2006 CDGB Housing Assistance program. These funds are targeted for improvements to housing occupied by low to moderate income families. Ms. Johnson encouraged us to create a simple program that can address varied needs of low-income families throughout town. Reviewing ideas to initiate this program soon.