

## **Light Up the Village Agenda**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**1:30 PM**

**Hooksett Public Library, NH Room**

**31 Mount St. Mary's Way Hooksett, NH 03106**

### **Attendance:**

Tony LaCasse, Dena Vaudrien, Stephanie Perry, Jane Martina, Justin Sargent, Barbara Thinnes, Bob Thinnes, Ben Berthiaume, Thomas Bartula, Rob Hebert, Tim Robie, Mike Willneff, Jeff Paquin, Marissa DelHay, Moriah Billups, Ian Tewksbury

**Tony LaCasse called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.**

### **Meeting Minutes:**

**Tony LaCasse made a motion to approve the November 20, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Perry. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

### **Other Business**

Tony LaCasse welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all participants to take 5 minutes to write down constructive feedback to share with the group. As well as new ideas for this year's event. Each participant then shared their feedback with the group.

Dena Vaudrien highlighted the success of the bridge stroll, storytime, and the concert but suggested revising the layout of the room where the Boy Scouts and the Spot Eatery were located, as the room was crowded.

Stephanie Perry suggested publicizing the event earlier through local and state news outlets, implementing clear directional signage, spreading out the Craft Fair for better flow, hiring more food vendors, and acquiring pop up tents in the event of bad weather.

Justin Sargent emphasized the need for thorough planning, suggesting at least 2-3 months in advance to ensure smooth parking, traffic flow, and resource availability. Tony LaCasse sought parking feedback from this year's event. Justin Sargent noted that there was confusion about the designated parking areas and suggested clearer signage for next year.

Rob Hebert praised the tree lighting and offered constructive feedback of the parking on Veteran's Drive. An earlier closure was proposed for next year, acknowledging this year's concerns about the trolley and traffic congestion.

Tim Robie expressed enthusiasm for Robie's providing the food next year, suggesting an outdoor food setup complemented by in-store activities. Tim Robie also raised concerns about

the noise from the food trucks this year disrupting the carolers and the delay in trash removal until the next day.

Prior to the bridge lighting ceremony, concerns emerged about the safety of temporary ramps. Thomas Bartula highlighted the tripping hazard and suggested better lighting for next year. Tony LaCasse proposed the installation of luminaries on the bridge.

Echoing concerns about parking, Mike Willneff expressed his concerns about the weather, which impacted both attendance and experience of food vendors. Based on the food vendor's feedback, he thinks that they may not return next year. However, Mike Willneff mentioned that the Boy Scouts were very happy with the event.

Adding to the conversation about event improvements, Jeff Paquin reiterated that addressing parking and communication issues should be top priorities. He further addressed the need for a plan to handle bad weather, especially considering that this event does not align with other town tree lightings.

Ian Tewksbury emphasized pre-event communication with the Fire Department, suggesting an information packet outlining roles and burn permit procedures. He thought that this year's burn permit system for small fires worked well, but requested professional lighting for the fire house to match the overall professionalism of the event. Tony LaCasse, seeking improved communication, requested an email introduction to the Fire House Captain which Ian Tewksbury will do.

Seeking to address challenges from this year's event, Ben Berthiaume suggested developing a plan covering road closures, waste management, and permit acquisition. He also advocated for increased signage, especially along Route 3A, to guide attendees towards Cigna for parking. These suggestions led to a discussions about a potential partnership with the Library and exploring the possibility of a Saturday event date that could also involve collaboration with the Fire Department's Santa Parade.

Bob Thinnes suggested the Historical Society as a potential location for handicap parking. Following discussion, it was determined that the available spaces and accessibility barriers at the Historical Society make it unfeasible for next year's event.

Barbara Thinnes suggested a single continuous storytime session for next year, letting families drop in at any time. Discussion followed regarding suggestions for addressing feedback received about Santa's appearance at the event.

Marissa Delhay offered a range of suggestions to improve next year's event, including clearer signage for Santa photos, assigning a dedicated photographer, announcing the date earlier and notifying the community months in advance, increasing social media efforts, and considering a rain date. Her suggestions led to a discussion about the potential continuation of the Craft Fair and the possibility of Robie's selling S'more kits.

Moriah Billups offered ideas for early sponsorship efforts and a dedicated community networking role on the committee. This prompted a discussion about improving the accessibility of the Festival of Trees and addressing concerns about this year's Craft Fair.

Expressing appreciation for all of the feedback, Tony shared his own suggestion to establish communication with Robie's Preservation Corp. He concluded the feedback portion of the meeting by announcing his initiative to establish a new Light Up the Village committee and invited everyone to join him at the Town Council meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup> for further discussion.

### **New Business**

Following a discussion about outlets on the bridge, Ben Berthiaume suggested installing metered outlets at both ends.

Lilac Bridge snow removal was discussed: DPW currently utilizes two snowblowers, but using any deicer on the bridge is prohibited. Tim Robie suggested the use of sand to increase the traction of the bridge during inclement weather.

Discussion around the 2024 Light Up the Village date was tabled to allow Tony LaCasse time to coordinate with the Fire Department and Library.

Tony Lacasse reiterated his proposal to establish Light Up the Village as a separate committee.

Tony LaCasse discussed a potential 2024 meeting schedule for Light Up the Village, which includes a monthly meeting. Several attendees at the meeting shared their interest in becoming members which include Mike Willneff, Marissa Delhay, and Tim Robie. Stephanie Perry, Bob Thinner, and Barbara Thinner are interested in being alternates on the committee.

Tony LaCasse concluded by outlining a plan to send thank you notes to all who contributed to make this year's event successful.

**Tony LaCasse adjourned the meeting at 3:07 PM.**