



OTAC Promotions Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, 10/7/19 · 5:30 PM · Old Town Welcome Center

Attending: Charlie Fish, Lanita Byrne, Alex Flanigan

Charlie opened the meeting with a brief overview and discussion of the Shop Local project. The committee has formally decided on the “Windependent!” logo and brand designed by Alex, as presented in the last OTAC meeting.

The core mission of Windependent! at this time is to design a calendar of 4 quick and easy promotional events for the calendar year beginning in January 2020. Ideal events will be primarily driven by individual business efforts, organized under the Windependent! umbrella. Charlie recommended a postcard mailer/shop local “passport”, a co-operative holiday pop-up display event for cross-promotion between stores, possible Random Acts of Kindness events benefitting local non-profits, and a “Meet the Makers” event where local businesses brought in the artisans behind their products to interact with the public.

Alex did research on the Main Street forums and found that some communities have had success with scratch card/raffle type events for local shopping. Charlie addressed the legality of raffle tickets, pointing out that tickets must be advertised as “no purchase necessary” and therefore don’t help boost sales.

Lanita expressed a desire for events that are not limited to one day, pointing out that such events tend to conflict with other events, limiting potential customer base. We could cast a wider net with multi-day events. Charlie agreed that the passport mailer could be a month-long event.

Lanita asked about the potential for sidewalk sales or outdoor markets. The topic of permits for outdoor display of merchandise was raised. Lanita felt strongly that store owners would be more likely to buy in and participate enthusiastically if permit fees were waived. Alex informed the committee that outdoor display of merchandise permits are handled through Zoning and the conversation would have to begin there. Alex also indicated that this year’s Holly Jolly celebration includes an outdoor market component and that local business are more than welcome to participate.

Alex brought up the possibility of using the Small Business Saturday Neighborhood Champion event as a “soft open” for Windependent!, by using the event to hand out stickers or small informational cards to spread the word and boost attention before kicking off at the beginning

of next year. The committee enthusiastically agreed on the decision to get stickers and handouts. Alex will look into budget and ordering before next meeting.

Alex brought up the separate topic of business promotion through downtown events. After receiving numerous complaints about “dead” business nights during Friday Night Live, Alex suggested creating an incentive where FNL tickets can be shown for a small discount in stores on the night of the event. For example, your ticket stub can be redeemed for 10% off your purchase in walking mall stores. Lanita expressed that store owners are already frustrated with constantly being asked to offer discounts and sales. Alex asked for alternate actionable suggestions, stating that in order for the events to benefit business owners as requested, plans which the business owners find agreeable need to be suggested by the business owners themselves. The committee agreed to brainstorm on this topic before next meeting.

Action items for next meeting:

- Alex: price and order stickers for Shop Small giveaway
- Alex: Register for Shop Small Saturday Neighborhood Champion Event
- Charlie & Lanita: come up with ideas for ways to promote local businesses at FNL
- Charlie & Lanita: propose rough calendar outline for Windependent! 2020 events

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 12 at 5:30 PM. This date will be confirmed by the OTAC meeting on November 5.