

**10/28/25 Otis Revitalization Business, Culture & Recreation Subcommittee Meeting
Minutes ***

Tuesday, October 28th, 10:00 AM on Zoom

Members present: Glenn Steinberg, Chair, Stacey Schultze, Hal Kobrin, Susan Ebitz,

Absent: Celeste Watman

Guest: Robet Schlossberg

1. Meeting called to order at 10:05
2. **Business Roundtables Follow-up** Stacey shared Sharon DeLevie's findings from the Business Roundtable Focus Groups:
 - Completed two roundtable sessions with 10 businesses attending
 - Overall positive feedback: businesses love Otis and appreciate community support
 - Key concerns identified: staffing difficulties during peak season, need for younger families, desire for business organization
 - One business expressed frustration about food trucks and lack of direct access to committee
- **Business** The group discussed strategies to address business staffing challenges and identified potential businesses to recruit to Otis. A lack of water and sewer infrastructure were listed as obstacles. The subcommittee proposed exploring college internship programs and J-1 visas to recruit workers. Staffing challenges include housing costs, limited local college options, and infrastructure requirements. Investigating dormitory availability at Otis Ridge for summer workers will move forward. A plan was discussed to present MassHire and One Berkshire as resources for businesses.

Business Recruitment Research:

- Williamsburg Market identified as ideal model: local products, boutique feel, comprehensive offerings
- Big Y exploring satellite market concept with local branding and community ownership potential
- List of 20-40 potential businesses was compiled
- Considering "Discover Otis" event to bring multiple businesses to town, grouped by category
- Town website has placeholder for local businesses but not comprehensive
- DBA list compiled electronically (approximately 147 businesses)
- Estimated 150-200 total businesses in town including unlisted sole proprietors

- Plan to create mechanism for businesses to self-submit information to town website
- Lynn working on calendar system allowing direct business input

3. Affordable Housing Brainstorming

4. Banking Services

- Reached out to three banks; all declined to open branches in Otis
- Lee Bank cited insufficient volume for remote teller system
- Berkshire Bank also declined due to ROI concerns
- TD Bank (Erin Edwards) not yet contacted
- Hal meeting with Lee Bank Vice President next week
- Strong Select Board support for banking initiative

5. Downtown Revitalization

- UConn conducting Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessment of Terranova property
- Initial findings suggest contamination is less severe than expected; some remediation completed
- Select Board MOA signing expected November 25th or early December (Grant)

6. Recreation/Trail Development – Suggested creating trail map/brochure of trails in Otis. Consider Kayak tours of Otis reservoir, ponds and lakes. The group discussed working with MA Audubon.

7. Other topics

- **Communication channels:** Cathy serves as liaison for Otis Woodlands listserv; businesses should be given her contact for PSAs and event notifications
- **Otis Ridge events:** Hosting Halloween activities (free hot dogs, movie, Trunk or Treat) and ski swap in November; expanding advertising to surrounding communities
- **Zoning considerations:** Any corporate development must comply with historic village aesthetic requirements

8. Action items

- Send thank you notes to 10 businesses who attended roundtables with list of social media groups for free advertising, Email Cathy to request permission to share her contact with businesses for PSA distribution, speak with Eric at Otis Ridge this week about dormitory availability for summer workers, Create and post agenda for November 4th subcommittee meeting at 10am (Susan)
- Share compiled business recruitment list with all subcommittee members before November 4th meeting. Continue outreach to TD Bank through Erin Edwards regarding banking services. Follow up with Greylock Federal and

Adams Bank about banking opportunities. Coordinate with Lynn on business self-submission mechanism for town website. (Stacey)

- Meet with Lee Bank Vice President next week to discuss banking services in Otis (Hal)
- Send one-line agenda item to Susan for November 4th meeting. Consider approach strategies for business recruitment (individual outreach vs. group events) (Glenn)
- **Subcommittee (collective)**
 - Review business recruitment list and provide edits/additions
 - Prepare resources packets for businesses including MassHire, One Berkshire, Common Capital information
 - Plan "Discover Otis" event(s) for summer 2026, grouped by business category

9. Meeting Adjourned: 11:43

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Ebitz, Secretary
