

THE Deerfield Valley News

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Greeter grant given board approval

Thu, 02/18/2021 - 3:00pm Mike Eldred

By Mike Eldred



Wilmington Selectboard member John Gannon.

WILMINGTON- The Wilmington Selectboard discussed the Lake Raponda Greeter Program and Efficiency Vermont, and approved appointments and liquor licenses at their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday.

The Lake Raconda Association came before the board to request approval of funding for the greeter program at Lake Raconda for the 2021 season. The group was looking for \$2,500 from the town. The selectboard approved the money for the program.

The greeter program has seen a lot of success over the past four years, according to Carol Bois, Lake Raconda Association Secretary.

“We are the poster child for greeter programs across the state,” she said. “We have been asked to speak at sessions sponsored by the Department of Environmental Conservation.”

The 2020 program ran from July 12 through Labor Day. In previous years, it began on Memorial Day weekend. The program completed 846 boat inspections during their shortened 2020 season. In 2019, a much longer season, approximately 1,120 inspections took place.

“Last year, 80% of visits were from the region. They were neighborhood boats. They were asked, and they told us that they use Lake Raconda exclusively,” said Bois. “It really is a neighborhood lake.”

The money requested for funding the program goes toward porta-potties at the lake and paying staff members, the greeters, all of whom are locals. Last year they had three staff members, two college-age young men and a senior citizen.

“There was increased use of the lake last year, due to COVID, and we are anticipating that increase of use this year as well,” said Wilmington Economic Development Consultant Gretchen Havreluk.

Rep. Rebecca White attended the meeting in her other role as a community engagement manager for Efficiency Vermont. The Deerfield Valley has been selected for the 2021 Efficiency Vermont Targeted Communities program. “The program is meant to support individual towns or a series of communities in accessing Efficiency Vermont programs and giving special programs,” said White. The towns included in this year’s effort in addition to Wilmington are Wardsboro, Whitingham, Dover, and “there’s a special tailored program for Jacksonville Electric customers,” said White.

Through the program, offers will be available for residents, businesses, nonprofits, landlords, and municipalities. Some of the offers include virtual home energy visits for residents and businesses; incentives targeted specifically at restaurants as the Deerfield Valley has many; and free products, like lightbulbs, for interested renters and landlords. There is also funding for energy efficiency upgrades at two nonprofits in the Deerfield Valley.

As the community engagement manager, White is interested in getting involved in the community in order to best serve the area. White explained that typically in a non-COVID year, she would actually come to the area and get involved with the community in order to understand their needs. This year, she hopes to do so virtually.

The board also took care of some clerical duties. They appointed Brain Holt, owner of 1A Coffee, to the

planning commission. Board members also approved liquor licenses for Red Fox Shop, River Valley Market, Anchor Seafood Restaurant, and a special liquor license for a whiskey tasting at the Hermitage Club.

Town Clerk Therese Lounsbury told the board that ballots for the 2021 Town Meeting were sent out on Saturday. “One was actually dropped at my house already today. Our community should get flooded with ballots over the next couple of days,” she said.

The town will hold an informational meeting on Monday, February 22, at 6 pm, for all those who have questions or wish to hear more about what has been presented on the ballots.

The next regular selectboard meeting will be held Tuesday, March 9, at 6 pm. Meetings are currently held virtually. Login information can be found at wilmingtonvermont.us/documents/agenda.

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