Presentation for City Council Meeting, 5/25/2021
Formation of
Stoughton Downtown Merchants Association

Planning Committee:
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On Feb., 2019, the members of the Stoughton Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee from the RDA met for 18 months to learn ideas and strategies for the development of revitalizing the downtown area of Stoughton. Ayres Associates was hired and offered specific suggestions to the subcommittee, City leaders, and to residents of the community, after gathering information from holding public meetings, doing surveys, and forming focus groups. One of the main suggestions from the staff of Ayres, was to form a business association striving for membership from downtown area businesses. Reasons for having an association would be to have local business owners communicate more frequently with each other about what each has to offer, to work together on offering downtown events to the public, and to help support new startup businesses for stabilization.

Keeping this in mind, for the past several months the Association planning committee has been meeting and has outlined the mission and objectives of what the Stoughton Downtown Merchants Association would be and what it could offer for the Stoughton community:

Mission: to bring awareness and collaboration to the downtown business community aiming to support and promote retail downtown businesses by holding planned events, providing friendly shopping, and creating opportunities that touch lives dedicated to everyone.

Objectives:
*preserve downtown historic beauty
*market and advertise on websites and social media to promote small and large community events
*create an exciting local and out of area shopping destination
*help attract and sustain new downtown are area businesses

Members of the planning committee are in favor of the Stoughton Downtown Merchants Association to become a non profit organization or a 501©(6).
The fee for Member Association: $400/year, not based on employee number; $200 for non merchants which would allow advertising in future guidebook.
An event would be planned downtown at least every quarter.
City boundaries for becoming members of the Downtown Merchants Association will be outlined.

We have modeled information for the formation of the Association from the help and assistance of the Monroe St. Merchants Association, Madison. Our current work is forming bylaws to be used for the non profit status.

An outline of start up costs is provided and described in the "pie chart" that outlines the percentage of expenses for specific line items. We are requesting that these expenses be considered for payment through the American Rescue Plan for helping to increase ways and to support the revitalization of downtown businesses through this project. We appreciate your time and effort toward this consideration.

Thank you!