



Sandwich Business Group

www.DiscoverSandwich.com

We invite and welcome your membership in the Sandwich Business Group!

To: Current and Potential Members

2020 was a challenging year for all of us individually and the SBG as an organization. We started the year with great plans for a variety of projects throughout the year but had to make a significant course correction when the impact of the Covid pandemic became apparent. Our main emphasis was to keep the membership informed of what government support programs were available to businesses. We focused a lot of effort on the website (discoversandwich.com) and sent the large postcard-sized business listing to the residents of Sandwich and surrounding towns. In addition, we sent a letter to Sandwich residents communicating the need to support their local businesses during the pandemic.

Your 2020 dues were based on the original plans which were not fully accomplished leading to a cash surplus at the end of the year. The current plan is to eat into the cash balance rather than maintaining a large balance and, therefore, **the dues for 2021 have been significantly reduced to \$65 versus \$130 last year**. We felt this was only fair to 2020 members since we were not able to do what we had planned and you had paid for.

Associate Memberships (for businesses not in Sandwich) are also \$65 for 2021, reduced from \$75.

The deadline for 2021 membership is February 28, 2021. Your membership provides the following general opportunities:

- Your business name and contact information listed on our website: DiscoverSandwich.com.
- The SBG Facebook site is available for member businesses to post and share from! (facebook.com/discoversandwich)
- Attendance at workshops sponsored by the SBG with guest speakers relevant to creating a viable and successful business.
- An exposure in the community through participation of the SBG in local events, either with members present or by sponsorship: Town Meeting, Christmas in the Village, etc.
- Ability to participate in other collaborative advertising with fellow businesses and opportunity for greater visibility on the Discover Sandwich website as a sponsor.

The Sandwich Business Group is not just about networking with each other. It's about supporting and fostering the economic viability of our community as the community supports us. Please contact a current member if you need more information. An application form is enclosed for your convenience.

Attached to this letter is a backgrounder on the SBG and what is planned for 2021. We hope that you will continue or initiate your membership and involvement in the organization.

Regards, Don Sutton
President, Sandwich Business Group

SBG Backgrounder

The Sandwich Business Group was originally founded in 2005 as a way to collaborate on affordable advertising and marketing with fellow business enterprises within the town. The group's formal status as a 501c6 nonprofit organization (business leagues/chambers of commerce) was completed in 2015. The primary purpose of this type of organization is to improve the business climate in the locality of the organization. How do we do that. First of all is our mission statement:

- Provide businesses and organizations with a variety of resources and material support to grow, thrive and sustain themselves.
- Preserve and protect our unique heritage without unduly inhibiting needed adaptation or change for growth and stability.
- Create a welcoming and supportive environment for families, visitors and community groups.
- Use our influence, skills and resources to assist in building a vibrant community of engaged, caring and committed citizens.

Supporting the mission statement are pillars or focus areas that provide the synergy to keep faith with the overall mission. The pillars are: Economic Development, Community Relationships, and Marketing. Activity in all three areas are needed to be a viable organization. We currently have committees working on 2021 plans in all three of these areas. The extent of projects will be determined by Covid guidelines as the year progresses. We just don't know what limitations will be in place during the typically busier summer season. Ideas include:

- Working with the Planning Board to establish a subcommittee to edit chapter 6 (Economic Development) of the 2011 Master Plan as well as an SBG sponsored committee to research critical economic trends and get public input on desired economic environment.
- Supporting community events like Christmas in the Village that add to the ambiance and well being of the community and fostering partnerships with other town organizations.
- Creating a robust marketing program based on current marketing best practices. This includes our website, facebook page, and printed and other digital advertising. The marketing field is changing rapidly and we need to stay on top of the trends.

The question about value always comes up relative to the membership fees and the answer is not particularly straightforward. Clearly, businesses acting independently could do almost no marketing for \$130/year (recent dues rate). Acting collectively provides a tremendous opportunity to leverage a small amount of money. However, it is difficult to specifically identify which customers are responding due to advertisement and how much business you would get without doing any advertising. It is kind of a leap of faith that it helps somehow but very difficult to quantify. Getting someone in your door may actually come from a secondary or tertiary source and you would never know that it was ultimately related to your SBG connection.

Some businesses in the SBG don't rely on advertising or don't cater to visitors coming to town. So what is the value of SBG membership? Our recent survey identified several subjective aspects to membership:

- Opportunity to learn business practices from other members
- Sense of community, being involved, and kept aware of what is happening in the community
- Show support for the general business community

We have consistently had over 60 members each year and the great majority of members feel like the annual dues has been a worthwhile investment in their business as well as the general business climate of the town.