Town of Farmington  
Economic Development Committee  
Tuesday, January 10, 2023  
Selectmen’s Chambers  
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

**Committee Members Present**: **Others Present**:  
Danielle Harris, Chairman Kelly Heon, Finance Dir./Admin Asst.  
Taylor Crawford, Vice Chairman Jason Lauze  
Adam Giles  
Dan Woodman  
Gerry Vachon, Alt. Selectmen’s Rep  
**Committee Members Absent**:  
Penny Morin, Selectmen’s Rep, excused  
Stephen Henry, Planning Board Rep, excused  
KJ Cardinal, excused  
Lynn Fuller

**1). Call to Order:**Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:** None

**4). Review of Minutes:   
December 13, 2022-** Public Session Minutes- No errors or omissions  
**Motion**: (Giles, second Woodman) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0-2 (Crawford, Vachon abstained).

**5). Review Short Term Goals:   
a). Update on Business Directory and Welcome Letter with Business Form Link-** Mrs. Harris said at the last meeting they discussed having a welcome letter including the business form link and she drafted that and they don’t have a pre-read of that but last time they talked with Mrs. Morin and they could push that through. She said the only thing they are waiting to hear from is Planning Director Kyle Pimental because he wanted to include something on the process to go through with the Town if anyone hasn’t yet as a part of the welcoming letter. She said she would reach back out to Mr. Pimental and asked if Mrs. Heon had anything she wanted to add.   
Mrs. Heon asked if they want to send a letter to all of the businesses that are going on in town right now or just the ones they think are new.  
Mrs. Harris said everyone that’s in the current Business Directory list. She said they have the updated list from the NH Secretary of State and she would send it to all those businesses that are shown as active in town and make sure their contract information is up to date so they can get them on the website but to also include a message that if they haven’t officially registered with the Town and gone through that process (asking them to do so).   
Mrs. Heon said she would remind Mr. Pimental about that and forward a draft of the letter to him for his comments or suggestions. She asked if any postage was included in their budget.  
Mrs. Harris said they were going to do it via e-mail and with that list they have an e-mail address of everyone. She said she wanted to confirm the process with them and included notes not to worry if you haven’t and you’re not in trouble but this is the process so folks are aware.   
**b). Website Updates-** Mrs. Harris said they did several updates on the EDC side of the website and the only things left to add are the business form link for the convenience of any new businesses that come to town and to have Ms. Fuller added to the site as a committee member. She said when last they spoke they were looking for any other ideas if they had been to other town’s websites and asked if they had any ideas on making improvements there.   
Mr. Giles said just linking up with other committees is going to be helpful and that they said something is going on at the schools.  
Mrs. Harris said Mr. Henry previously mentioned the school district is putting on a Spring Fling.  
Mr. Giles said a lot of people don’t even know what the EDC stands for so he felt that putting it out there and getting people to understand what it is will help.  
Mrs. Harris agreed that more promotion would help.   
Mr. Crawford said one thought to include on the website is the resources that businesses have and some kind of menu or page they could click onto to look at those practices they could take advantage of like state funded programs they may qualify for.  
Mrs. Heon said she would see if she could get in touch with Denise Roy-Palmer who was the Executive Director of the Wentworth Economic Development Corporation and she would have a lot of those resources that she would be able to talk to them about and then they could get them on the website. She said she explained to Mrs. Harris earlier that they need a little bit of patience on the Town side as the person that was doing the website gave her notice last week so they are scrambling to get that position filled. So if things don’t happen as quickly as you would hope we’re doing our best she said.  
Mr. Woodman said it’s going to take some time and when everybody gets through with a bunch of stuff and everybody is here the ball will start rolling and he knows everybody is busy.  
Mrs. Heon said this is a really busy time of year for the Town because they going through budget season, getting ready for Town Meeting and putting the Town Report together. She asked to be reminded to talk about they need a picture but tonight might not be the night to take a picture and they might have pull everybody in just for a picture day because it can’t wait until their next meeting.   
Mr. Giles then added that he has the contact information for Mrs. Roy-Palmer because she helped him get his building.  
Mrs. Heon said she has her contact information and that she was going to come to an EDC meeting a couple of months ago so she will see if she can attend their Feb. meeting.  
Mrs. Harris said they have a business resource page currently and some of the links are still active and when they have someone in place they need to finish updating that.   
**c). Face book Page –Update on Social Media Policy-** Mrs. Harris said their Face book page is still running and they are keeping that active. She said they have already doubled in followers than what they had but it is still pretty grassroots and is going slow. She said they updated the social media policy and asked if that was discussed at a Selectmen’s meeting.   
Mrs. Heon said no and that she was going to get that to the Town Administrator this week and he’ll get it on the Selectmen’s agenda in the next couple of weeks. She said she thinks there is something in the social media policy that prohibits promoting businesses which makes it difficult for the EDC to have a Face book page and to put businesses on there so they may need to look at that policy and maybe give an exception to the EDC because that is basically what the function of their committee is. Hopefully by the next time you meet they (Selectmen) will have made a decision she said.  
Mrs. Harris said there is one other section that says if you’re logged in as the Town interacting or engaging with other platforms which may be just “liking” something and things like that so people are aware that there is a platform that’s active.   
**d). Quarterly Newsletter Update-** Mrs. Harris said they have been getting positive feedback on the last newsletter after it was posted around town. She said they are just building the next one and they want to get it ready by March Town Meeting and asked if they wanted to talk about Town Meeting because they discussed having a booth there.  
Mrs. Heon said she was hoping that Mrs. Morin would be here because her husband is the Moderator and she wanted to find out what the rules are as to where you can set up a booth during the day of Town elections or the evening of Town Meeting just for exposure. She said she would contact Mr. Morin or the Town Clerk and find out what parameters they would have to follow in order to do that and then e-mail Mrs. Harris and let her know. Other boards have done that in the past like the Conservation Commission I just don’t know in what fashion so we’ll find out she said.   
Mrs. Harris said it would be great if they had a table there and folks are planning to go to the Town Meeting anyway and she would be happy to be there. She said they budgeted to have copies of the newsletter there and things like that.   
Mrs. Heon said she would have to ask the Town Clerk but there are probably more people that show up throughout the day on voting day than at Town Meeting. Sometimes it’s a pretty low turnout for Town Meeting so if you want to reach as many people as possible it might be better to have a booth on Town voting day but that could cause problems with people having to work and not being able to man a booth. I’ll ask around and see how other boards have handled that and get back to you she said.   
Mrs. Harris asked for the dates for voting day and Town Meeting.  
Mrs. Heon said voting day is on 03/14/23 and Town Meeting is on the evening of 03/15/23.  
Mrs. Harris said they could use the newsletter to promote and increase participation in the Town Meeting. She said one of the things to be discussed at Town Meeting is some of the bridges which is something a lot of people in town are passionate about and that falls under the EDC as well as it means connecting the economy and it’s important for infrastructure.   
Mr. Giles said the sewer line needs to go up to the businesses in town where the Irving is and asked if that is part of this committee or more of a Town Meeting thing.   
Mr. Vachon said there is a **T**ax **I**ncrement **F**inancing District up there.   
Mr. Goodman said he was on the TIF Committee and they dismantled that.  
Mrs. Heon said there is still a TIF District and they need to get the TIF Advisory Board going again because we have to have one because we have the TIF District and the TIF development plan and there’s money going into that fund every year. She said she would see if Mr. Pimental can come to their next meeting and give them some education about that.   
Mr. Giles asked for the meaning of a TIF District.  
Mrs. Heon said there is an area in town that was designated as a TIF District and there are approx. 50 properties in that district. She said when the TIF District was formed in 2015 the assessed values of those properties were frozen such that any improvements made after that date to any of those properties the tax on that incremental assessed value-say for example you have a property that was assessed at $100,000 in 2015 but then next year you made improvements to it so now its assessed at $150,000 the taxes on that extra $50,000 in assessed value do not go into the general fund they go into the TIF fund and those funds are to be used specifically for bringing a sewer line up Main Street and onto Rt. 11. The amount of money that gets put into the TIF fund would not be enough to cover it so it would only be part of an overall financial plan that would include bonds, grants and other ways of generating revenue she said.  
She said the TIF revenue plan is going to be looked at this year by Mr. Pimental and some of his colleagues at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission because it needs to be updated because the numbers are not accurate for what it would cost to bring a sewer line up Rt. 11. She said it’s something that is still a plan but it’s something that can’t happen immediately because you have to plan for it and unfortunately the town hasn’t been moving in that direction since they adopted the plan. One step would be resurrecting the TIF Advisory Board and the TIF plan states that 1 person from the EDC has to be on that board and when we get that up and running one of you will be asked to sit on the TIF Advisory she said.   
Mr. Giles said a commercial piece of land having a septic system doesn’t really work so that needs to be addressed if they’re going to try to bring business into town. He said some people can’t use places because of that reason and offered to be the EDC rep to the TIF committee.   
Mrs. Harris said she would add this topic to the next meeting agenda.   
Mrs. Heon asked if they were looking to get the newsletter out prior to Town Meeting to promote what that is.  
Mrs. Harris said she would like to do it by March 1 and that she has a draft now.  
Mrs. Heon said she wanted to make sure that whatever ideas they may have to put in the newsletter especially regarding the bridges or anything that is going to be talked about that they run that by legal counsel because she didn’t know if as a Town committee they could promote one thing or the other legally.   
Mrs. Harris said it wouldn’t be to have a voice on any specific matter it would just be to inform the public that Town Meeting is occurring and this is what will be going on. She said she did a little research and over the last year it has come up regularly with the Selectmen and there is a new economic development strategy that this might be incorporated into and she highlighted that information. She asked if information on the Town Meeting is posted anywhere.  
Mrs. Heon said no but it is getting close enough so they should start putting it on the website.  
Mrs. Harris said she was going to include some businesses where spring is hot time for them and highlight some of the local farms, CSA season to sign up for and the maple syrup season. **e). Budget Update –** Mrs. Harris asked if the draft budget was sent around.  
Mrs. Heon said no and that that would go to the Town Administrator with the social media policy to the next Selectmen’s meeting.   
Mr. Giles asked what number they decided on for their budget and if it was $2,000.  
Mrs. Harris said right now it’s around $1,500 but she realized for printing costs they included all of the newsletters but they didn’t include all of their regular meetings for when they do pre-reads, etc. and that will get them to $2,000 or over.  
Mrs. Heon said the Town will typically include printing for meetings in the overall budget and they don’t have to specifically include that in their budget. She said she would talk to the Town Administrator and they need to get some number from them because it’s going to go to a public hearing very soon. There’s going to be something in the budget for the EDC but whether or not its $2,000, I don’t know she said.   
Mr. Vachon said the presentation of the Town budget to the Budget Committee is on Jan. 18 and the public hearing is on Jan. 25.

**6). List of Available Spaces for Prospective Businesses:**Mrs. Harris said Mr. Henry was going to reach out to realtors about the open business spaces so they could create a separate list for that but he is not here tonight. She said unless anyone has heard anything they would circle back to this item.

**7). List of Civic and Community Groups for Potential Sub-Committee:**Mrs. Harris said this list was sent over so they don’t have this as a pre-read but they can forward it to the group so they can get it electronically. She said they wanted to get a full list of the groups so they can reach out to the subcommittee and asked if anyone has had a chance to connect with any of the community groups but no one had anything to add.

**8). Any Other Business that May Come Before the Committee:**Mr. Giles asked if they had to go over the budget. He asked if they could determine a number and then request that number.   
Mrs. Heon said Mrs. Harris submitted a draft budget and bottom line was $1,500 and she broke it down so if they ask why you are asking for $1,500 there were specific categories with the amounts needed for each category.  
Mr. Giles asked where that information is available and if it is on the website or on a personal e-mail for all of the EDC members.  
Mrs. Heon said Mrs. Harris created the budget and just sent it to her. She then briefly left the meeting to make copies of the budget for the committee.  
Mrs. Harris if she would also get them copies of the letter to business owners. She explained that the person who managed the Town website also did the pre-reads (and had resigned) and they will have that information in the future.   
She said she included some “light” items in the budget like refreshments for the proposed job fair and added lines for donations such as a space in town to hold the job fair and that Rec. Center may be a possibility. She added if they didn’t end up having the job fair they could use the refreshments and materials at Town Meeting or another event.  
Mr. Woodman said they are fixing up the building across from the Farmington House of Pizza and asked if anyone knew what is going on there.  
Jason Lauze said the first floor is going to be apartments.  
Mr. Vachon questioned that they would be allowed to put in first floor apartments downtown in the Village Center.   
Mr. Lauze said the use was “grandfathered” supposedly because the previous owner had apartments there and they just did all residential windows and it doesn’t look like a store front.  
Mr. Woodman said he had heard about this from a lot of people and he didn’t think they could do that because of the change to the rules.  
Mr. Lauze said he didn’t like that there has been a change in the ownership and it is still allowed to fall under the old rules and there are businesses that would come in and take those spaces.   
Mr. Vachon said he would look into it and get back to Mr. Woodman.   
Mrs. Heon returned to the meeting and gave copies of their proposed budget to the members.   
Mr. Giles said the job fair is a good idea and asked if it would be a separate event or if it would be part of the Spring Fling put on by the school district.  
Mrs. Harris said it could be anything and joked that since he brought it up he can lead for it.  
Mr. Giles said he didn’t mind helping out with it and it is hard to find help now.   
Mr. Crawford asked if they would want to open up the job fair to businesses outside of Farmington.  
Mr. Giles said that goes against the point of the EDC doing this and he would keep it to in-town. He said it would provide an opportunity for high school graduates to get a job locally.  
Mrs. Heon gave the committee copies of the draft letter to be sent to local business owners.  
Mrs. Harris said asked if they thought anything was missing and they will work on getting the section on the planning review approved. She said any of this is open to changes and she just pulled from what they discussed last time.   
Mrs. Heon said she would sent a copy of the letter to Planning Director Kyle Pimental for his thoughts on what the businesses would need to do if they haven’t registered with the Town.  
Mr. Vachon asked if the last acronym “SEPC” should be “SRPC”.  
Mrs. Harris said he was correct as that stands for Strafford Regional Planning Commission.  
Mrs. Heon asked when you click on the link to the Town Administrator where that goes.   
Mrs. Harris said it goes to the Town Administrator’s contact page.  
Mrs. Heon said the link should go to the Planning Dept. and she would work with her on where that link goes to as they don’t have a Planning Dept. Secretary right now.

**9). Group Picture for Town Report:** Postponed due the absence of 4 committee members.  
Mrs. Heon asked if they were available to come in some other time to get a picture like on a Friday afternoon because it would really be pushing it if they tried to wait until Feb.   
Mrs. Harris then suggested they take a temporary photo at the end of the meeting in case they can’t get in before the deadline.  
Mrs. Heon said they could take a photo tonight and list the missing members under the photo or they could set up another time to come in for the photo. She said she would ask the Selectmen’s Secretary to contact Mrs. Harris to see when they could come in for a group photo.   
Mrs. Harris asked what information was needed in the EDC report for the Annual Town Report.  
Mrs. Heon said typically it would be their accomplishments from the previous year so that might not be relevant this time. She said she would e-mail her a couple of the past reports so she could see how it was put together in the past and she could talk about getting started again, these are some of their goals and what they hope to accomplish for the next year.

**10). Adjournment:   
Motion:** (Vachon, second Giles) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 6:45 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon  
Recording Secretary

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Danielle Harris, Chairman