

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Randy Orvis, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.
Martin Laferte, Planning Board Rep.
Angela Hardin

Committee Members Absent:

Diane Blair

Others Present:

Kathy and Charlie King

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Orvis 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). Presentations:

A). Friends of Farmington- President Charlie King thanked the committee for inviting him and Mrs. King to the meeting and for providing an opportunity for them to speak about the organization. Mr. King said the group is a non-profit organization started by Farmington residents in 2016 with the purpose of promoting the betterment of the Town and its residents by encouraging tax deductible donations to be used for project related causes. He said the current Board of Directors includes himself as President, Vice President Neil Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer Sylvia Arcouette and Directors Mary Barron and Walter Pigeon. Mr. King said the group has a broad purpose which is to support the betterment of the Town and its residents on a project by project basis to meet the needs of the community. The group is an independent organization and is not associated with any Town or other non-profit organizations or groups but may partner with other groups on a case by case basis. He said some community challenges the group intends to address include supporting addiction recovery, job training and to provide meeting and event space and increase foot traffic downtown.

The group's initial project is to purchase the former Mason's Building which had sustained fire damage, has been renovated and put up for sale. Following a tour of the building the group thought it would be a good opportunity to achieve their goals and decided to sign the purchase and sales agreement for the building.

Mr. King said the 6,000 square foot building has three floors which were gutted and renovated including new insulation, flooring and a new roof. Additional planned renovations include installation of new windows and a new heating/air conditioning system to increase energy efficiency of the building. The existing stained glass will remain as part of the front façade he said.

He said uses for the building include providing incubator space for new businesses which could include office/conference room spaces, spaces for addiction treatment and support services, event space and studio space for artisans and recreational uses such as yoga or martial arts

classes.

Mr. King said the intent of the project is to be self sufficient through donations, fund raising and a small rental fee based on the business's ability to pay to cover utilities and upkeep of the building.

Mr. Orvis then asked for any questions/comments from the committee.

Ms. Hardin asked if the \$110,000 price shown in the presentation is the total purchase price including the additional planned renovation costs.

Mr. King said the purchase price is less than the amount shown but has not been made public by the group. He said the project has also been approved for bridge financing in the event they are not able to raise the total amount of funds needed by the closing date.

Mr. Laferte said he thought the posted asking price was a reasonable price considering the size of property involved. He asked how the group plans to pay for utilities, taxes, heating and air conditioning.

Mr. King said they plan to make the building as energy efficient as possible, maximize use of the building and share the costs for utilities among the users.

Mr. Laferte asked if the building has a fire protection system.

Mr. King said the building was brought up to code during the renovations after the fire and has a fire alarm system.

Mr. Laferte asked how the scheduling of use of the spaces would be handled.

Mr. King said the scheduling would be on a first come, first served basis with "open access" through a security code or pass keys.

Mr. Laferte said he is a member of a local three town political group and that he was embarrassed by the fact that the group can't meet in Farmington because they don't have the money to pay for the use of meeting space in town. He asked if his group would be allowed to use the Friend's building.

Mr. King said users do not have to be a non-profit organization and they would be able to use a meeting space if available when requested. He said the group has not yet worked out all of the final details and has not had any discussions about who would not be allowed to use the building. He added the group would carry the insurance coverage for the building and the user may have to sign a waiver of liability depending on the proposed uses.

Mr. Orvis asked if there would a time limit for a new business to "make a go of it" and if the group would then help the business to move on to another rental space.

Mr. King said they would provide the space for the business, help people with little or no business experience find out where to go for help and support for a fixed amount of time to get on their feet and then help them to "fly the coop" into their own new space.

Mr. Laferte asked if the incubator businesses would sign an agreement and suggested a clause requiring a status review after a 6 month or 1 year period could be added to the agreement.

Mr. King said the intent is to have an application process with information about the business's goals and a 1-2 year business plan. He said the businesses could access established programs such as the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and also provide resources among themselves such as sharing office equipment and sources for supplies, contractors, services and vendors.

Mr. Orvis asked if a computer network and wireless access will be available to the users.

Mr. King said they intend to provide internet/wireless access and to obtain computer equipment

through donations.

Mr. Orvis asked if the presentation has been made elsewhere.

Mr. King said this is the first presentation from the recently formed group as they have been getting the paperwork completed for the project. He estimated the group has received about \$55,000 in donations and hopes to have 100% of purchase price raised in time for the closing. He said they have expanded their requests for donations to a national level and some fund raising events are scheduled.

Mrs. King said the group has scheduled a dance and silent auction on Feb. 25 and a group of musicians have come forward to donate their performance at an event to be held at the American Legion in July.

Mrs. Titus suggested the group also consider hosting a business expo event to highlight home businesses during the Hay Day celebration so people could walk in and find out about the home businesses in town.

Mr. King said that the space could also be used for job fairs put on by employers or temp agencies.

Mr. Orvis asked if someone with a home business that needs a one-time meeting space to meet with clients would be able to use the space.

Mr. King said that they would and noted that everyone's time needs are different with most businesses using the space during the day and meetings mostly held at night.

Mr. Orvis then thanked Mr. King for presenting the project to the committee and said he hoped the project was so successful they would have to hire someone just to do the scheduling of the space.

Mr. King replied that they hope to make the operation as efficient as possible and that all of the people involved in the project are volunteers and won't receive payment for their time. He thanked the members for inviting them and said to watch for future projects once the building is purchased and operational.

He said donations can be sent to Friends of Farmington, Box 621, Farmington, NH 03835. He added that anyone with questions/ideas or needing more information should contact him (603-978-5740) or any of the other board members.

B). OHRV Presentation- Mr. Orvis said that due to some health issues he was unable to schedule a meeting with Mr. Gamache at this time.

5). Review of Minutes:

January 10, 2017- No omissions or errors found.

Motion: (Titus, second Roy-Palmer) to approve the minutes as written passed 5-0.

Ms. Roy-Palmer suggested the committee approve the December minutes which were tabled at the January meeting at the next meeting in March. Mrs. Titus will ask the Selectmen's Secretary for copies of the December minutes for review.

6).TIF District Status- Mr. Laferte reported that the last Planning Board meeting was canceled due to the weather and that the board has not discussed the TIF District recently. He said that he understood the TIF District Advisory Board is still waiting for 1 additional member to begin the process and that he did not have anything else to report at this time.

Mrs. Titus said there are 3 advisory board members who are business owners in the district and 1 property owner and that one more member is needed. She advised any interested property

owner in or abutting the district to contact the Town Administrator or Selectmen's Secretary at 755-2208 for more information.

7).By-Laws:

Mr. Orvis said he forgot to bring a copy of the committee by-laws to the meeting. Mrs. Titus will ask for copies of the by-laws to be provided to the committee members for review at the next meeting.

8).Old Business:

A). Sarah Greenfield Business Park- Members received copies of the business park regulations to review and discuss at the next meeting. Discussion included the process involved in modifying the regulations, making recommendations for changes to the Selectmen and scheduling a joint meeting/workshop with Selectmen and the park landowners.

Mr. Orvis said he has reviewed the regulations previously and in his opinion most of them should be thrown out as the excessive amount of covenants may be scaring away potential buyers. He added that the owners should just be required to abide by the Town's Site Plan Review regulations.

He suggested the members read the regulations in preparation for discussion at the next meeting and try to look at the requirements as a potential business owner might look at them.

9). New Business:

A).Ribbon Cuttings- Mrs. Titus said 3 new businesses including a barber shop, realty office and game room will soon be open for business downtown. She said she would like to promote the new businesses with a ribbon cutting ceremony that will include committee members and Town officials and be published in the local newspapers. She asked the members if they would like her to contact the business owners and asked for the members' availability to attend the ceremonies. Consensus was to ask Mrs. Titus to schedule the ribbon cutting ceremonies and to try to provide a 48 hour notice to committee members.

10). Any Other Business:

A). Newsletter- Mrs. Titus asked the committee to approve the February edition of the monthly newsletter for distribution.

Ms. Roy-Palmer noted that 2 of the web addresses shown needed to be corrected (SCORE-lakesregionscore.org, NH Division of Economic Development- nheconomy.com) and that Ms. Hardin needs to be added to the list of committee members.

Mrs. Titus added that member Diane Blair has not attended several meetings and that she attempted to contact her but has not received a response.

Mrs. Titus said that Administrative Assistant Erica Rogers has requested that suggestions for topics to be included in future newsletters be sent directly to her at

welfaredirector@metrocast.net .

Ms. Hardin asked that an update noting that Crowley's Market has re-opened 2 gasoline pumps be added to this edition or included in the March newsletter.

Mr. Orvis asked to include a request for additional committee members. Discussion included the need for diversity of members and ideas on the EDC and that all of the Town committees are seeking more members.

Mrs. Titus asked which business should be featured in the next newsletter. Consensus of the committee was to highlight the 3 new businesses and the ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Ms. Roy-Palmer suggested the committee's mission statement be included across the bottom of the monthly newsletters.

Mr. Laferte suggested that phone numbers for the business links listed in the newsletter be included for people who do not have computers/Internet access.

Motion: (Roy-Palmer, second Hardin) to approve the newsletter as amended passed 5-0.

11). Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 6 p.m.

The agenda will follow the same format as the agenda for this meeting.

12). Adjournment:

Motion: (Laferte, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 7:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Randy Orvis, Chairman