

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, April 11, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Randy Orvis, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.
Martin Laferte, Planning Board Rep.
Angela Hardin
Lisa Capone
Sharon McKenney
Elise Haig (6:15 p.m.)

Committee Members Absent:

Diane Blair, excused
Kathy King, excused
Matt Stormann

Others Present:

Bobbie Stormann
John Law

1). Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

Chairman Orvis called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2). Public Comment: None.

3). Review Minutes:

March 3, 2017- Page 9, Item #12, Next Meeting- Amend the date of the next meeting to Tuesday, April 11, 2017.

Motion: (Titus, second Laferte) to approve the minutes as amended passed 6-0-1 (Roy-Palmer abstained).

4). TIF District Status from the Planning Board Representative:

Mr. Laferte said the Planning Board did not discuss the TIF District at their last meeting. He said the matter was handed over to the Selectmen and asked to have his report on the district taken off the agenda as the board is no longer dealing with it.

Aroma Joe's- Mr. Laferte reported that the Aroma Joe's coffee shop proposed for Route 11 received Planning Board approval contingent upon receipt of the DOT driveway permit. He said the board expressed some concerns about the changes to driveway plan made by DOT from 2 entrances to 1 entrance and are awaiting more details.

HVAC- The board approved the plan for Joy's HVAC Services at their new location at 188 Farmington Road (Route 11).

Honey Dew Donuts- Mr. Laferte also reported that the plan to change the entrance to Honey Dew to allow access to the site off Route 153/Main Street has been withdrawn by the applicant. When the owner found out the state permitting process will cost more than the actual work he withdrew the plan he said.

Mrs. Titus suggested the committee obtain a report from or meet with the TIF District Advisory Board when they begin meeting. She said that to her knowledge there are

enough members now for a full committee and will check with the Administrative Assistant to learn the status of the membership.

EDC/PB Joint Meeting-Mr. Orvis then asked when the last joint meeting with the Planning Board was held. He said he would like to discuss where they are going with the review of Town regulations at a workshop meeting.

Consensus of the committee was to ask Mrs. Titus to contact Planning Board Vice Chairman David Kestner and suggest they schedule a joint meeting at their next availability.

5). Moose Mountain Regional Alliance Update:

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said the group will be launching in late May or early June and plans a special event in June to celebrate the launch. She will update the committee at the next meeting.

Mrs. Titus asked about the asset list being created by the group containing local business information for each town in the Alliance.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said they are looking for certain types of businesses and other assets that can be marketed on their website. She said she will obtain additional information on the status of the list for the next EDC meeting.

6). Old Business:

A). ATV Trails- Mr. Orvis told the committee that he did not attend the meeting of the New Durham Valley ATV Club because the meeting did not take place. He said he went to advertised meeting place and none of the club members showed up and no one notified him of a rescheduling of the meeting. He said that he now questions the reliability of the club to assist with starting an ATV club in Farmington.

Mr. Orvis said the Tri-City ATV Club (Dover, Rochester, Somersworth) has trails in Rollinsford and Rochester that may allow expansion of riding areas to Farmington and said he will contact the club for more information.

B). Natural Gas- Mr. Orvis said that due to time constraints he did not have the opportunity to call the gas company representative.

C). EDC By-laws- Mr. Laferte suggested the date of the election of committee officers should be included in the by-laws. He said they could simply include one sentence that states the date for the election.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that Article IV states the committee shall follow the fiscal year as per that of the Town and suggested that means to elect board officers when the other Town boards/committees hold their elections.

D).Now Hear This! - Mr. Laferte told the committee that he received 2 new hearing aids that afternoon and has already noticed a big difference in his hearing. He also took the opportunity to welcome all of the new members to the Town boards/committees.

E). UNH Co-op Discussion- Ms. Hardin suggested the committee continue the discussion with the UNH Cooperative Extension begun at the public meeting held last

month at the Town Hall. She said the next step is to set up a meeting with UNH Community and Economic Development Program Team Leader Charlie French and the Board of Selectmen for further discussion before committing to sign a contract or pay any fees. She asked Mrs. Roy-Palmer to speak about her experience with the program. Mrs. Roy-Palmer said she is very familiar with the UNH Business Retention and Expansion Plan mentioned at the meeting as she facilitated the 3 year project for the Town of Wolfeboro. UNH has made some changes to the program to shorten the commitment to 2 years she said.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer did not attend the meeting last month and said she had difficulty watching the meeting online but did review the minutes from the meeting. She said that during the meeting it was mentioned about doing a Plan NH Charrette in Farmington where architects and engineers provide designs for projects such as a Main Street redesign, which was done here several years ago.

Mrs. Titus said there are a lot of these things in place already and cited the charrette that was done for the downtown area.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that redesign included the entry way, the Town Clock, traffic pattern and the curbing at the bank. She said a second charrette probably wouldn't happen here and asked if any copies of the previous redesign are available for review. Mrs. Titus said 2 of the Selectmen advised her of the existence of the charrette but she was not sure of its current location.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said she also had a copy at her office and will provide it to the committee if she can locate it.

Mrs. Titus said it would be better for the committee to work off the existing plan with Mr. French rather than to waste money on something we already have. We should spend it on something we need she said.

Mr. Orvis asked if Wolfeboro had a lot of vacant spaces downtown when they began the Business Retention and Expansion Program.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said there weren't many vacant spaces but there is always a turnover there every year. She said the Town needs to decide what types of businesses to be surveyed for the program such as focusing on one type of business or to take a "broad brush" sampling of all the businesses in the community. Wolfeboro decided to sample all of the businesses and interviewed 93 businesses using 50 volunteers with their EDC operating as the leadership team. The team received specific training on interview techniques so that they followed the script and did not insert their own opinions into the interviews. UNH compiled the survey data and then the participants picked an initiative to work on based on the results of the survey she said.

Mrs. Titus asked if there was a cost involved with the program.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said the Town would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with UNH at a cost of \$2,500. She added the value of what the Town received in the amount of hours and expertise from UNH is nowhere near the cost of the program and the end

results will be much better if the community has some “skin in the game”.

Mr. Laferte said he understood there was a meeting at the library related to the UNH discussion.

Mrs. Stormann said that Michelle Elbert and Linda McElhinney are working with the Selectmen to form a committee to work with UNH and are organizing the volunteers. They will have a big role in getting the community involved and keeping this going she said.

Mrs. Titus said there were about 30 people at the library meeting which is enough to form a committee. She said they need to discuss it with the Selectmen and it will be wonderful if they can step up and get the job done for the Town.

Chairman Orvis said he felt overwhelmed with whether to pick a program or to have them customize a program to assist the town and didn't know where to go next. He suggested the next step might be a joint meeting of the EDC, Selectmen, Planning Board and the UNH Co-op.

Ms. Hardin said that is the logical next step is know where we are going and to get everyone on the same page.

Mrs. Titus said that is why she suggested the joint meeting between the boards so they could hash it out and decide what they want to do before meeting with Mr. French.

Ms. Hardin asked how Wolfeboro got started with the UNH program.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that in Wolfeboro participation was mostly by the EDC, Selectmen, town staff and volunteers and was not primarily a function of the Planning Board. She said they began when she mentioned the Business Retention/Expansion program to the EDC and they invited a UNH representative to meet with committee.

Mr. Laferte said that he did not want to narrow the choice down to one program aimed at businesses and that they should try to picture the whole town.

Mrs. Titus said she did not want everyone to become overwhelmed and suggested they pick no more than 2 business programs, find out the cost involved, accomplish those tasks and then move on to something else. She said trying to do it all at once is not going to work and they need to take the time do it right.

Mrs. Stormann said Mr. French advised the town could accomplish 2 or 3 initiatives if enough volunteers were involved. She said she could see business leaders being involved in business initiatives while community members could be involved in other programs with a core group that keeps everyone moving forward.

Mrs. Titus said that is why there is a need for a workshop with Selectmen and the EDC and not look they are not on top of the game when Mr. French returns.

Mrs. Stormann said Mr. French will help them flush out the targets and help the town get to where it wants to go. She added if they all work together they can make it work.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said they also have to take into account the capacity of what the town can do and also the capacity of what UNH can do as they can only take on so many towns each year. The town may have to chose one program, accomplish it and then try

to get on the schedule the following year for the next program and do them one after another. She then asked if the funds were approved for the program fee at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Stormann said it was approved in a “round-about” way where the money was added to the bottom line of the budget with a recommendation to Selectmen that it be spent for the UNH program. She added that there is a meeting scheduled for April 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the library and invited an EDC representative to attend the meeting.

Mrs. Titus said the group is not a recognized town board so a representative can’t attend the meeting and make statements on behalf of the committee.

Mrs. Stormann said she was asking someone to just attend the meeting and see if it was something they wished to be involved with.

Ms. Hardin asked how they schedule the joint meeting.

Mrs. Titus suggested the Chairman contact the Town Administrator and ask him to assist the committee with setting up the joint meeting.

Ms. Roy-Palmer asked if Mr. French was attending the meeting at the library.

Mrs. Stormann said he was unable to attend the library meeting because they are busy working with Portsmouth at this time.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if Mr. French brought any brochures describing the programs to last month’s meeting.

Ms. Hardin said he supplied a folder with very brief descriptions of the programs and that she would give a copy to Mrs. Roy-Palmer.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer then encouraged the community to take advantage of the program and said her only concern with the Wolfeboro project was getting enough volunteers to come forward as it is a big undertaking. Now that it has been fine tuned it may be a little more manageable she said.

F). Ribbon Cuttings- Mrs. Titus said she could not connect with the owner of RSA Realty and said she will try again on Friday morning to set up a ribbon cutting for a future Friday morning. The Puddledock Press has agreed to take and publish a picture of the event with a few days notice. She said the new barber shop was having an ADA issue and is not open yet.

Ms. Hardin said the shop is open as of today.

Mrs. Titus said she will try again to contact the owners of barbershop and the Broken Lance to schedule their ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Ms. Hardin said she will also try to connect with the owners when they are at their businesses and tell them the committee would like to set up a ribbon cutting ceremony.

G). Newsletter - Mrs. Titus said RW Realty would be the featured business for next month’s newsletter. Other possible featured businesses include Peaslee Funeral Home, Energy Resource Group, AJ Foss and B & B Fabricating.

Mr. Laferte suggested that Geometres Blue Hills owned by surveyor Randy Orvis be featured in the newsletter.

Mr. Orvis declined saying that it could be seen as a conflict of interest to include his business as a member of the EDC.

Mrs. Titus said she would ask the business owners to write up some information about their businesses and have them on hand to include in the newsletter each month. She also asked the members to send e-mail addresses or links to assist businesses to Administrative Assistant Erica Rogers for inclusion in the newsletter.

Mr. Orvis suggested putting information about the ERZ zones in the newsletter as the program is already in place and could help with some of the vacancies downtown.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said the program is partly based on the amount of money spent for improvements but is mostly based on the number of jobs created by the project. It is a tool that could be used to attract businesses she said.

H). Sarah Greenfield Business Park-Mrs. Roy-Palmer then asked if there were any new developments with the town owned properties located in the business park.

Mrs. Titus said Selectmen approved sending out an RFP to obtain an evaluation of the properties to help the board set a price for the lots. She said she will inquire if decision has been made on the price and bring the information to the next meeting.

Mr. Orvis said he felt one of the hindrances to selling the lots are the protective covenants tied to them. He said he did not know why they were needed as the lots are already protected by the Town planning and zoning regulations. He said the covenants have been changed in the past and that they haven't always been adhered to such as the requirement to occupy the lot within one year. You are lucky to get through the planning process in one year he said. He suggested the committee review the covenants at the next meeting.

7). New Business:

A). Election of Officers:

Chairman:

Motion: (Titus, second Roy-Palmer) to nominate Randy Orvis for Chairman passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman:

Motion: (Titus, no second) to nominate Martin Laferte as Vice Chairman. Mr. Laferte refused the nomination.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if Mrs. Titus could serve as Vice Chairman while being the Selectmen's Rep. to the committee.

Mrs. Titus said she was not sure and will discuss it with the Town Administrator.

The nomination for Vice Chairman was tabled until the next meeting.

Secretary:

Motion: (Titus, second Hardin) to nominate Denise Roy-Palmer as Secretary passed unanimously.

8). Public Comment:

Elise Haig wanted it noted for the record that she was in attendance at the meeting but was unable to be seated with the members because she has not yet been sworn in. Mrs. Titus advised her to meet with the Town Clerk during business hours to be sworn in.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if the committee now has the full number of members as outlined in the by-laws (at least 7 members and no more than 11 members).

Mrs. Titus said that 3 members were missing from the meeting (Mrs. King, Ms. Blair and Mr. Stormann) with 7 members present totaling 10 current members.

Mrs. Stormann noted that Mr. Stormann was not notified of the meeting or his acceptance as a member.

9). Any Other Business to come before the Committee: None.

10). Adjournment:

Motion: (Laferte, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Randy Orvis, Chairman