

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Randy Orvis, Chairman
Angela Hardin, Vice Chairman
Elise Haig
Sharon McKenney
Denise Roy-Palmer

Committee Members Absent:

Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep., excused
Martin Laferte, Planning Board Rep.

Others Present:

Dan DeSantis, Town Planner

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 Input:

Mr. DeSantis said he came before the committee to discuss the \$25,000 grant recently received through PLAN NH to conduct a study on the potential redevelopment of the former Fire Station property. He said the property is recognized as the entrance to the downtown area and should be well done.

He said a steering committee is being formed and it is important that there be a very strong community engagement component to the plans. The committee will be comprised of representatives from the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Economic Development Committee, Conservation Commission and three at large members and may be ready to have its first meeting within the next two weeks he said.

He said there is warrant article to update the Master Plan on this year's warrant and that he would like to have the steering committee also help guide the revision of the Master Plan.

Ms. Hardin asked about the potential time commitment that would be involved to complete the old fire house and Master Plan projects.

Mr. DeSantis said there would be a two year commitment requested of the committee members. Then there would be time to do a thoughtful better job coming from the residents/committee members up instead of from the top down and it would be helpful to the developers to know what the town wants.

He said the only qualification to be a committee member is to be a positive community member and no special skills are needed. He suggested Ms. Hardin consider representing the EDC and that Ms. Haig who is also a member of the ZBA consider representing that board on

the steering committee.

Ms. Hardin asked if any of the citizen members at large have been chosen.

Mr. DeSantis said Jim Horgan has agreed to be a citizen member after his term is up as a Selectman in March. He said he is looking for 2 more at large members and asked the members to contact him with suggestions for residents who may be interested in joining the committee.

Mr. Orvis said a downtown area resident should be included as a citizen committee member.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if there are any other plans or projects that the EDC should know about.

Mr. DeSantis said the Planning Board is reviewing the transfer of development rights and the Form Based Codes ordinance system. There has been an inquiry about a parcel located in the Sarah Greenfield Business Park but it is not a job creating development he said.

Mr. Orvis asked how to expand the Economic Revitalization Zone which currently stops at the Main Street Bridge.

Mr. DeSantis said he was more concerned about extending the sewer lines down Route 153 and Route 11.

Mr. Orvis recalled that a business owner who owns a property just over the bridge would like to take advantage of the ERZ program but it is not included in the zone. He said that another building just down the street has been for sale for a long time and it might make a difference to potential buyers if the building was included in the zone.

Mr. DeSantis said he would discuss the possibility of expanding the zone with the Town Administrator. He said it is imperative that the sewer lines be extended and although it has been turned down at a previous Town Meeting the town will have to face up to it someday.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked about the status of the TIF District and if the committee has been formed.

Mr. DeSantis said that a full committee has been appointed but he didn't know the committee/district status.

4). Review of Minutes: Tabled until next meeting

5). Newsletter:

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said they should consider changing the background color to a lighter color as the red background does not reproduce well if the copies are printed in black and white.

She suggested the following edits be made: Business of the Month feature: fifth line from the bottom- add a space between catered and menu; third line from the bottom- "cupcakes" is misspelled; several words with upper case letters where it is not needed; Congratulations on the Grant Award section- six lines down there are 2 periods after Main Street.

Mr. Orvis suggested the March edition include an article about Groen Construction winning a national award for the energy efficiency design of the Public Safety Building.

Ms. Hardin suggested they also recognize that the First Congregational Church is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Orvis said that the Town Pound is also on the National Register of Historic Places. He explained that the site consists of an eight foot high stone wall that was used to contain stray animals before more modern facilities were available. He added that the pound is in the geographic center of town and what makes it different from other pounds in the state is that most of them have walls that are only about four feet high.

Motion: (Hardin, second Haig) to approve the newsletter with the recommended amendments passed 5-0.

6). Goals:

Ms. Hardin said at the last meeting the committee decided they would review this item if there were any updates to any of the committee's long or short term goals. There were no updates at this time.

7). Planning Board Report: Tabled due to Mr. Laferte's absence.

8). Mural Presentation:

Ms. Haig said the artist was unable to attend the meeting to discuss painting a mural on the side of the former Subway building due his work schedule. She said he asked if he could meet with the committee on a non-meeting night and suggested they meet the next day.

Ms. Hardin explained that a committee meeting must be posted at least 24 hours in advance.

Ms. Haig offered to work with the artist to set up a meeting in a week or 2 to give enough time to properly post the meeting and avoid having to wait another month to meet with him.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if the former Subway building is completely empty now.

Ms. Hardin said there may be an office being rented in the building.

Ms. Haig asked if written permission had been received from the owner to paint his building.

Ms. Hardin said this matter was handled by former member Kathy King and suggested they contact her and get the contact information for the owner to make sure things have not changed now that he may decide to sell/lease the building.

Ms. Haig said she would contact Mrs. King and get the building owner's contact information.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked how the art work would be paid for.

Ms. Hardin said the discussion has not gotten that far yet and that they planned to first have a discussion with the artist about the materials needed and get a cost estimate for the project.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said she originally thought they were considering having a mural done on the Cumberland Farms building which is a brick building. She noted that the Subway building is constructed with clapboards.

Ms. Haig asked if it would be easier to paint a mural on the "Cumby's" building.

Ms. Hardin said that Mrs. King did not receive a positive reaction about the idea from the owner of the Cumberland Farms building. She asked Ms. Haig to ask Mrs. King about that building and where she left off with the project.

Ms. Haig said she would speak with the manager of the Cumberland Farms store and try to obtain contact information for the building owner.

9). Old Business:

Resignation: Mr. Orvis said Mrs. King notified the committee 2 months ago that due to scheduling conflicts she had to resign from the committee. He said that due to a canceled meeting in Dec. and the lack of a quorum in Jan. they were unable to accept her resignation at that time.

10). New Business:

A). TIF District – Mr. Orvis suggested the EDC work more with TIF District Advisory Board.

Ms. Hardin said she spoke with Mrs. Titus following the last meeting to learn the status of that committee. She said Mrs. Titus said she would follow up with the Town Administrator to see if he was available to attend an EDC meeting and provide the committee with an update.

Ms. Hardin said Mr. Capello was unavailable for this meeting as he had to attend the Budget Committee Public Hearing on the Town budget. She suggested they table the matter and request that Mr. Capello attend their March meeting. She said she also spoke with a TIF District committee member who said there has not been a committee meeting yet.

B). ERZ Sign- Mr. Orvis said there is a new sign in Rochester that notifies travelers that they are now entering an Economic Redevelopment Zone and asked why Farmington does not have any similar signs for its ERZ. He said anyone traveling the area that may be considering moving their business and sees the signs may look into moving to the ERZ to take advantage of the benefits of the program.

Ms. Hardin asked who they would talk to about getting those signs for Farmington.

Mr. Orvis suggested they would first need to talk to the Selectmen.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said they should also find out where Rochester got the signs and their cost.

Mr. Orvis said he would attend a Selectmen's meeting and discuss the matter with them.

C). NH Liquor Store Closing- Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked when the liquor store in town would close.

Ms. Hardin said the store was scheduled to close on March 5 and the employees would report to the new store in Rochester the next day.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if there are any plans for the use of the liquor store space.

Mr. Orvis said it will take a few weeks to conduct a final inventory after the store is closed.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if the Rite Aid drug store planned to expand into the liquor store site.

Ms. Hardin said there was no information available on the drug store's plans.

Mr. Orvis said that Rite Aid owns the building so it will be their decision whether to rent, sell or expand into that space. He said if they do expand into the liquor store space and become a liquor agency they can still sell liquor there.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer noted that Rite Aid has been bought out by Walgreen's which may affect plans for the Farmington store.

Mr. Orvis speculated that the drug store will lose a lot of business once the liquor store closes. Ms. McKinney predicted that the people with motor homes, trailers and other large vehicles traveling on Route 11 are not going to want to deal with the traffic lights and the traffic circle at the new liquor store in Rochester and will wait until they get to Gilford to make their purchases as it is easier to enter and exit that mall.

D). Committee Openings- Mrs. Roy-Palmer suggested they begin recruiting new members to fill the open seats on the EDC.

11). Next Meeting: March 13, 2018 at 6 p.m.

Agenda- Pledge of Allegiance, Public Comment, Review of the meeting minutes of November 2017, January 2018 and February 2018, Newsletter, Goals, Planning Board Report, Mural Discussion, Old Business, New Business, ERZ signs, TIF District Discussion with the Town Administrator, Next Meeting, Adjournment.

12). Adjournment:

Motion: (Hardin, second Roy-Palmer) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Randy Orvis, Chairman