

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

Committee Members Present: Chairman Angela Hardin, Selectmen's Rep. Dave Connolly, Planning Board Rep. Martin Laferte, Randy Orvis, Breanne Varney

Committee Members Absent: Vice Chairman Denise Roy-Palmer-excused, Secretary Sharon McKenney, Elise Haig

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Hardin 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). Welcome New Members:

Chairman Hardin welcomed new members Selectmen's Rep. Dave Connolly and Breanne Varney and thanked them for joining the committee.

5). Review of Minutes:

October 9, 2018 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Laferte, second Orvis) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-2 (Connolly, Varney abstained).

6). Planning Board Report:

Mr. Laferte passed around a copy of the site plan for the construction of a warehouse and office space to house a roofing company at the Sarah Greenfield Business Park. He said the Planning Board approved the plan and the applicant did not say when he plans to begin construction of the buildings.

He said the board also approved a major subdivision for the Farmington Ridge Mobile Home Park. The existing mobile home park can't be expanded so the owner came before the board to subdivide the property into 2 parcels consisting of the 31 acre mobile home park and approx. 99 acres of undeveloped land. The plan also includes the attachment of the .8 acre section of land that includes the entrance road and the right-of-way to the park as part of the park lot. He said the owner does not plan to do anything to the undeveloped lot but decided to subdivide it from the park lot to in an effort to reduce his liability.

Mr. Laferte said that Bill Parker (and Stuart Arnett) of ADG Group came before the board at their workshop meeting to discuss plans to redevelop the old fire station lot and the update of the Master Plan. He said most of the discussion focused on the Master Plan revision and that

the board plans to work on portions of the update on a monthly basis.

Mr. Connolly asked if Mr. Parker would be coming before the other Town boards/committees to get their input on the Master Plan update.

Mr. Laferte said he did not know the answer to Mr. Connolly's question.

Chairman Hardin said Mr. Parker would be coming before the EDC to discuss the Master Plan.

Mr. Laferte said that Mr. Parker would be spending most of his time with the Planning Board and suggested it may be a good idea to have representatives of the other committees come to a Planning Board meeting to discuss the update of the plan.

7). Board of Selectmen Report:

Mr. Connolly said the EDC has a \$750 budget in 2018 and that as of Nov. 8 only \$30 has been expended from the budget line. The Selectmen would like to reduce the line to \$500 for 2019 and have asked if there are any expenditures that can be made this year that can come off of next year's budget line he said.

Chairman Hardin said she was okay with reducing the line to \$500. She said that they do not have any major expenses planned for the remainder of this year and that only major expense planned for next year at this time is to host a meeting with Economic Revitalization Zone property owners and to provide refreshments for the meeting.

She said at this time the committee does not pay any membership dues to any organizations to support the committee and that the \$30 spent was to rent a booth space at Hay Day.

Mr. Orvis said he spoke with the Selectmen about the ERZ signs installed in Rochester notifying visitors that they are entering an Economic Revitalization Zone and suggested the same be done in Farmington. He said the Town Administrator said he would look into it and something may have gotten lost during the transition to the new DPW Director.

Chairman Hardin said the Town Administrator suggested she contact the sign company typically used by the Town and to get a price estimate for the signs. She said if the committee wished to spend the money for the signs from this year's budget she would look into getting price quotes.

Mr. Connolly said in his past experience with the Conservation Commission they used the state prison metal shop in Concord and suggested she get an estimate from them as well.

Consensus of the committee was to agree to the reduction of the budget to \$500 for 2019.

8). Old Business:

A). ATV Club – Mr. Orvis said he has been appointed as the Trail Master of the Farmington section of the Tri-City Trail Blazers OHRV Club and that there has been quite a demand to establish some trails in Farmington. He said they have talked to a few landowners and have the potential for several miles of trails if they can be connected with other landowners. He said that he and 2 other Trail Masters went to the Board of Selectmen the previous night to get permission to use Class VI roads in town for links between the trails. He said there are benefits to landowners who allow a trail to pass over their property such as the state \$2 million

liability coverage and the upkeep of the trails by the trail clubs and asked any landowner that is interested in allowing a trail over their property to contact him.

Chairman Hardin asked if there has been any progress on creating a “hub” in Farmington that would give riders a place to start and stop their rides.

Mr. Orvis said he intended to contact the Trustee of the NH Custodial Trust that oversees the property to obtain permission to use the former Davidson Rubber plant parking lot as a load/unload zone for riders but was unsure as to if he or the NH Bureau of Trails Chief should contact the Trustee who is in New Jersey. He said if the Trustee requires any fee for the use of the lot the club could not pay the fee and would have to apply for a grant from the state to pay the fee. He said he will contact the NH Trails Bureau Chief for advice on how to proceed.

B). Sarah Greenfield Business Park (SGBP) Meeting – Mrs. Hardin said she was still trying to track down all of the lot owners in the SGBP. She said the majority of the owners that she has spoken with are interested in attending a meeting to discuss the potential update to the park’s covenants. She said that unless they can get everyone together for a meeting then there is no point to having a meeting.

Chairman Hardin said she went before the Selectmen recently to discuss updating the covenants and the board decided that they will stay involved with the park and the covenants as they maintain an interest in the Town property behind the park and the fund set aside for improvements to the park access road.

Mr. Connolly said there may be an opportunity to add on to the park (with the Town land behind the park) at some point in the future.

Mrs. Hardin said there is also a potential to take the park access road through the property out to Route 11.

Mr. Connolly said the Selectmen at the time were the authors of the covenants and the present board feels they should be represented in the process.

Chairman Hardin said she hoped to be in contact with all of the owners by next month and they can then set a date for the workshop meeting. She said at a previous meeting Mrs. Roy-Palmer suggested asking one of the lot owners to run the meeting and the EDC could assist them.

Mr. Connolly suggested that one of park businesses could host the meeting at their building similar to how the Chamber of Commerce holds their “Business After Hours” gatherings in a member’s facility. The EDC could provide support for the event he said.

Mrs. Hardin said she liked the idea and just needed to determine who has the space to host the meeting.

C). Revitalization Forum Summary Report- The members received copies of the summary report for the community forum hosted by the Farmington Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee on Oct. 10 at the Public Safety Building. Mrs. Hardin said there was a good turnout with about 40 people attending the event.

She said she went through the report and highlighted the following areas that stood out in ways the EDC could support:

Businesses- Mrs. Hardin said the business ideas included a coffee shop, brewery, an anchor business to provide stability, a grocery store and restaurants besides pizza. People felt very strongly about the historical significance of the downtown and that they wanted to keep that look overall and not put in something super modern she said.

Green and Community Spaces- This was another big theme to come out of the forum.

Housing- This question went largely unanswered and there wasn't a strong consensus about what kind of housing, what it should look like or how much housing people wanted to see there. This is an area that needs further exploration she said.

Parking - Mrs. Hardin said that parking was also a big concern among the attendees as the old fire house lot is currently used for some municipal parking. She said Town Planner Dan DeSantis requested that the Stafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) do a parking study downtown to determine the demand for parking during certain times of the day and what types of spaces are available. She said Mr. DeSantis asked for volunteers to help the SRPC with the study by spending a few hours counting parked cars and that the SRPC will provide training for the study.

Arts, Cultural Opportunities and Creative Businesses - Mrs. Hardin said that Mr. DeSantis also asked if the EDC would brainstorm and informally gather ideas about the different types of businesses that they would like to see in the downtown area including those that would create a brand for the downtown, provide something different for the area and make it a destination. Mrs. Hardin said she highlighted public restrooms as something there is a need for. If we are drawing people downtown this is a service we probably should think about providing she said. The summary report also listed some potential actions for community leaders and citizen volunteers and Chairman Hardin asked the committee to consider the following:

1).Support or host a discussion on housing choices

2).Consider grants for infrastructure and façade improvements- Mrs. Hardin added that she will attend a 3 hour workshop with Mr. DeSantis to obtain information on Community Development Block Grants and would report back to the committee on the workshop next month.

Mr. Connolly asked if improvements to the building facades would have to be approved by the building owners.

Mrs. Hardin said the properties are privately owned and any improvements would require their permission and that is why she is not sure how the block grants would work. She said she thought that in some instances a block grant could be used to provide subsidized loans to the business owners at reduced interest rates.

Mr. Orvis said that the last time the downtown building facades were improved was approx. 30 years ago. He said the grants work but it would be good to have the property owners maintain them in between.

3).Inventory buildings downtown to determine ownership and contact them to discuss façade

improvements and creative ways to fill vacant spaces- Mrs. Hardin said this is also one of the goals in getting the property owners to attend an ERZ informational meeting.

4).Meet with the library and Historical Society to build on their success- Mrs. Hardin said throughout the key informant interviews conducted by the Steering Committee a lot of respondents discussed the library as the only reason they came downtown and something they saw as of great value and that they also valued the Historical Society.

Mrs. Hardin said she attended a planning meeting for the First Congregational Church's 200th anniversary and they are also looking for ways to get more involved with the community and community development.

D). Master Plan Economic Development Chapter- The members reviewed Chapter 5, Economic Development of the current Farmington Master Plan and the Economic Development chapter from the Town of Barrington's updated Master Plan. Mrs. Hardin said the Town of Barrington completed their Master Plan update in May 2018 and she provided the copies of the chapter to give the members an idea of what a different type of Master Plan looks like. She said the committee will become involved in the revision of the chapter this spring and their input will be valuable. She asked the members to review the materials and jot down any thoughts or questions for future discussions.

9). New Business:

A). SRPC Meeting - Mr. Laferte said that on Dec. 10 he and the new SRPC Director will meet with the Board of Selectmen. He said the new director plans to introduce herself to the board and to discuss some changes she is making. He said there are 18 cities and towns that belong to the SRPC and he is pushing for the small towns in the region to get as much "bang for their buck" as possible out of the SRPC. He said hoped to hear about the things they can do and are willing to do to assist the small towns at the board meeting and invited the EDC to attend. Mr. Connolly asked if the SRPC membership dues are assessed by the population size of the communities.

Mr. Laferte said that is correct.

10). Any Other Business to Come before the Committee: None

11). Adjournment:

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

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Angela Hardin, Chairman