

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Committee Members Present:

Angela Hardin, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice Chairman
Sharon McKenney, Secretary
Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.
Stephen Henry, Planning Board Rep.

Committee Members Absent:

Randy Orvis, excused
Breanne Varney, excused
Chad York, excused

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). Review of Minutes:

March 19, 2019 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Roy-Palmer, second Connolly) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Henry abstained).

5). Election of Committee Officers:

A). Chairman - Chairman Hardin asked for nominations for Chairman.

Motion: (Connolly, second Henry) to nominate Angela Hardin for Chairman;
Mrs. Hardin accepted the nomination.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

B). Vice Chairman – Chairman Hardin called for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Motion: (McKenney, second Connolly) to nominate Denise Roy-Palmer for Vice Chairman;
Mrs. Roy-Palmer accepted the nomination.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

C). Secretary – Chairman Hardin asked for nominations for Committee Secretary.

Motion: (Henry, second Connolly) to nominate Sharon McKenney for Secretary;
Mrs. McKenney accepted the nomination.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

6). Board of Selectmen Report:

Mr. Connolly said one of the biggest items the Selectmen are wrestling with is the condition of the town's roads. He said they are trying to figure out the best way to alleviate the damage that

is being caused by heavy trucks which is why there are road postings downtown.

Chairman Hardin asked if it was uncommon for towns to do it at this time of the year because of the condition of the roads.

Mr. Connolly said it is not uncommon and some towns do it permanently to help save the roads. He said we need to fix the roads so every bit of preservation we can do now helps.

Farmington always posts the dirt roads in the rural sections of town at this time of year he said.

Mrs. McKenney said she didn't think she had ever seen High Street in such bad condition. She said the big Coast bus travels through there and the edges of the street are crumbling. There is a sign that prohibits through trucking but busses are exempted she said.

Mr. Connolly said that at the previous Selectmen's meeting a resident brought up that oil trucks are also exempt but in his opinion the frequency and amount of oil trucks from several different companies going up and down the roads is causing constant wear and tear on the roads.

He said they need to look at each road individually but a common factor is poor drainage. If there is no drainage and there is not the correct shoulder material the water gets under the asphalt and goes through a freeze-thaw cycle damaging the roads he said.

Mrs. McKenney said that is what appears to have happened to High Street because there was a lot of rain and snow causing a large amount of ice there and now one portion of the road dips down which was never like that before.

Mr. Connolly said that when the road gets like that it can't be plowed correctly either. The board is aware of the issues and they wish it could be taken care of quickly but he suspects it will be a long and expensive process he said.

Chairman Hardin asked if there is triage type of conversation going on between the board and the Highway Dept to identify the top priority situations.

Mr. Connolly said they are in constant contact with the Highway Dept. and they are working on that. He said the November snow storm followed by the November thaw put us "behind the eight ball" right at the start of the season.

Mr. Henry asked if the downtown road postings are new and are not typically posted each year.

Mr. Connolly said to his knowledge the downtown postings are new as he did not recall seeing them there previously. He said an 8 ton limit is hard for some companies to abide by as an empty garbage truck is 20,000 pounds.

Mrs. McKenney questioned the number of trash removal companies coming through town with big trucks and said that she knew of at least 3 companies that use the town's roads.

Mr. Connolly said one of the biggest concerns is Cumberland Farms because of their use of an 18-wheeler that pulls down Civic Street for deliveries. It then goes down all of the other little streets in that area that was not made for heavy trucking he said.

Chairman Hardin asked if the Town has contacted Cumberland Farms and asked them if there is an alternative delivery system they could put in place.

Mr. Connolly said he did not know what Cumberland Farms' response was to her question. He

said he was only aware that some of their drivers have been confronted when they were caught driving on the posted roads.

Chairman Hardin suggested the Town should contact the corporation and discuss the matter with them. She said that some of their other stores may be located in more rural areas that have had to address this issue especially at certain times of the year.

Mr. Connolly said he was pretty sure the corporate division had been contacted because one of the things that had been discussed is possibly changing their delivery schedule to at night so the truck can park on Main Street when there isn't as much traffic and not have to use the side roads. Main Street, Central Street and Elm Street are state roads and the Town has no control over them he said.

Chairman Hardin said those roads were also built to a different standard and are rated for use by heavy vehicles.

Mr. Connolly said they are also still working on the water meter replacements and have begun a review of the proposed Master Plan update.

7). Planning Board Report:

Chairman Hardin officially welcomed Mr. Henry as the new Planning Board Rep to the EDC.

Mr. Henry said that he was out of town and could not attend the last Planning Board meeting when there was an update on the progress with the Master Plan revision.

He said a new business, Middleton Equipment, which sells equipment to arborists is coming to town on Route 11 after being approved by the board at the last meeting. The business is currently in Middleton and is moving to his new location in Farmington he said.

Chairman Hardin said he is moving to the site of the former Picker's Market and the new owner wants anything left over to be removed so some good deals would probably be available.

Mr. Henry said he was at the site recently and the new owner has the building pretty well cleaned out but there were still a few items left.

Mr. Henry said the equipment sales will be conducted at the front of the lot and the owner also plans to process about 150 cords of fire wood a year at the rear of the site.

Mr. Connolly then said an ad was posted for a new Town Planner and one for a Land Use Assistant. The Selectmen changed the Planning/Codes Secretary title to Land Use Assistant because it covers code, planning and land use. If you look at the job description it is a lot more than secretarial duties he said.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if the Town Planner would be a full or part time position.

Mr. Connolly said it would be part time up to 30 hours a week.

Mrs. Hardin asked about the hours for the Land Use Assistant position.

Mr. Connolly said he was not sure of the number of hours per week for that position. He said in the mean time the Town has contracted with the **Strafford Regional Planning Commission** for planning services until a Town Planner is hired.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if it is known which SRPC Regional Planner will work in Farmington.

Mr. Connolly said he did not know who would be assigned to us but the Town requested the Planner spend 8 hours a week on site in the office on the same day each week.

8). Old Business:

A). ATV Club – Tabled due to Mr. Orvis' absence.

B). RFP Committee – Steering Committee Update – Chairman Hardin said the RFP Committee has not met but its formation will be good for future use. She said at the last Steering Committee meeting there was a brief discussion about the RFP (Request for Proposals) (for the former fire station property) and the Town Administrator said that they may send out an RFQ (Request for Qualifications). She said she wanted some feedback from them about what their top priorities are for the site which will eventually be submitted as suggestions to the Board of Selectmen. These are the people who have been involved almost since day one with exploring uses for the old fire house by conducting key informant interviews, helping to set up and run the Community Forum at the Public Safety Building and by holding regular meetings she said. She said it wasn't a long discussion but that she heard suggestions such as multi-cultural mixed uses designed to fit in downtown, something unique and different and there is still a big question mark about potential housing on the site. They briefly discussed having an anchor business that's unique and not a national chain which could help drive other businesses to want to be around that business because it will bring in people from other communities she said. Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that a lot of the dynamic behind wanting to have an anchor business can be seen at the malls and now that a lot of the anchor businesses are disappearing there will be a change in that whole dynamic.

Chairman Hardin said the Ocean State Job Lots is taking over the front half of the former K Mart building at the Lilac Mall and J. C. Penny store is still there. She said that there is also the Ridge Marketplace with Market Basket and Old Navy as the anchors and Wal Mart is right next door. The anchors are bringing everything else in there because they see market share that they want a piece of which in turn is bringing the people in she said.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said even if some offices come into the old fire station space you will see the effect of those employees walking downtown to shop or get lunch.

Chairman Hardin said she is a big proponent of multi-uses for the old fire house site. Whether it includes housing or not in the end it would be nice to have a little of that with retail spaces on the first floor and apartments above the first floor she said.

She said she sent an e-mail to the members informing them of the downtown parking study to take place on Thursday and Saturday. She said the study area will be conducted along Main Street from the Municipal Office Building to Civic Street and includes the parking at the Town Hall, all on street parking and the TD Bank parking lot. She asked for volunteers to fill some gaps in the Thursday afternoon study schedule.

Mrs. Hardin said the volunteer would first meet with the person who was doing your route before you and then walk the 30-40 minute route and count the parked vehicles/spaces and

gather license plate numbers so we know if it is the same or a different car parked in each space. The participants will wear safety vests and have cards that explain the study purpose and how to contact the SRPC for further questions. The plate information will only go into an Excel spreadsheet for the study purpose and will not go anywhere else she said.

Mr. Connolly asked if the Police Dept. is aware of the study.

Chairman Hardin said the Police Dept. has been informed of the study especially since there will also be some UNH students helping out who will have identification with them. She asked the members to look at the spreadsheet which is on Google Docs for a spot to volunteer and that the spreadsheet is updated when any open spaces are filled. The Thursday hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday hours begin at 10 a.m. and goes to 7 p.m. to capture any night time activity she said.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if there were plans to notify the general public that this will be taking place downtown such as on Face book or on the Cable TV Channel 26 Community Calendar.

Chairman Hardin said she asked the Town Administrator to post it on the Town website and that she would post it on the Community Forum Face book page.

Mr. Henry asked if there is a minimum age to participate in parking study.

Chairman Hardin suggested that he contact the SRPC with that question and that their contact information could be found in the e-mail she sent the members.

She said the UNH seniors will also be conducting a town study in Farmington for their Capstone project and will study the town from an economic development point of view. She said the students will be walking and looking around the downtown area, they will summarize their findings and suggestions which will be presented to Selectmen on May 6. She said she planned to attend the meeting and invited the other members to do so as well.

Mrs. Hardin said this data will go into the RFP or RFQ and there are a lot of moving parts right now. Realistically it will be June before they have something to bring to Selectmen and maybe by July the RFP/RFQ will be ready to send out to interested bidders. The students will make suggestions about the greater downtown area not just the fire house and their assessments may help us to find broader ideas for what to do with that space as well she said.

C). Business Survey – Mr. Connolly said he tried to get a list of the businesses that have been in town at least 10 years and got 10 pages from the Planning Dept. and printed out the Town website Business Directory. He read through the list and asked the members to tell him if business is still in town so he could eliminate those who are no longer in business. He said he will drive around to see if the businesses they are unsure of are still there.

Mrs. Hardin suggested that Mr. Connolly first check with the state website to see if they registered with them and that the business name is still active. She said he could also try “Googling” them.

Mrs. McKenney suggested the businesses may also have their own websites that Mr. Connolly could check.

Mr. Connolly said he has 2 goals with this project- 1) to find out how long business was here, their experiences and why they left, 2) to survey the current business owners to find out why they came to town, what they like and what are the challenges which may help them do things better.

Chairman Hardin said they need to keep trying to identify the business and then send out a survey letter to get their responses.

Mr. Connolly said he planned to bring a draft of the survey to committee in June.

Mr. Henry suggested they review the list every 6 months to see if additions or corrections are needed. He suggested they should see if they did exit interviews and they may find that certain industries don't do well in this town or because it is saturated with one type of business such as pizza places. He said this list is practically useless because they can't count on it to be accurate and if they keep it updated it will be accurate.

Mr. Henry asked if there is a standard for inclusion on the list or if it contains all business from home businesses to Wal Mart.

Chairman Hardin suggested they should ask if they see customers at their business, only at craft fairs, have retail space, do business by mail or online, are independent realtors or a realtor attached to a company out of town.

Mr. Connolly said anyone listening who did not hear their business read from the list to contact the Selectmen's Secretary at the Municipal Offices or click on the link on the Town website.

D). TIF District – Mrs. Roy-Palmer said she spoke with Town Administrator Arthur Capello to find out who is the Chair of the Tax Increment Finance District Advisory Committee and Mr. Capello said he is the Chair. She said volunteered to take over as Chair and that Mr. Capello gladly accepted her offer.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said there are 5 members of the committee and that she planned to contact the members to schedule the next quarterly meeting.

Mr. Connolly suggested that Mrs. Roy-Palmer check with Mr. Capello to see if the committee officers are appointed or elected by the members before taking on the Chairman's duties.

Chairman Hardin suggested that she check to see if there are bylaws or guidelines that may address the issue of committee officers.

9). New Business:

A). Renew Committee Membership – Chairman Hardin said she requested that Mrs. Roy-Palmer, Ms. Varney and Mr. York submit an application to the Selectmen requesting reappointment to the EDC as their terms are up. She said that she has received Mrs. Roy-Palmer's and Ms. Varney's applications which will be forwarded to the Selectmen's Secretary along with Mr. York's application once it is received. The committee has openings for up to 3 more members if there are any other residents interested in joining the committee she said.

10). Any Other Business before the Committee:

A). Moose Made Expo - Mrs. Roy-Palmer said on Monday, May 6 the Moose NH will hold the first Moose Made Expo for business-to-business vendors from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Tumbledown Farm on Route 109 in Brookfield, NH. She said from 6:30-9 p.m. they will celebrate the second anniversary of the Moose marketing initiative with music, food, beverages etc. We will be sending out information as they are looking for more vendors to participate she said.

Mr. Connolly asked if there is a cost to have a table space at the expo.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said there is a fee depending on the table size and more information will be available on Face book and by e-mail to the committee members.

Mr. Connolly asked if there is a cost to the public who come to the event.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said the event is intended as a fund raiser so there will be an admission fee to the public and vendors will have admission passes included in the vendor fee.

B). Sarah Greenfield Business Park – Mr. Connolly asked for the status of setting up a meeting with the business owners in the park.

Chairman Hardin said there is no update at this time.

11). Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 6 p.m.

12). Adjournment:

Motion: (Roy-Palmer, second Connolly) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 7:13 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Angela Hardin, Chairman