

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Committee Members Present:

Angela Hardin, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice Chairman
Dave Connolly, Selectmen's Rep.
Stephen Henry, Planning Board Rep.
Chad York
Randy Orvis

Committee Members Absent:

Sharon McKenny, Secretary, excused
Breanne Varney

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Hardin called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comment: None

4). Review of Minutes:

July 9, 2019 – Page 1, Committee Members Absent- add "excused" after Breanne Varney; Item #6, 8th line- strike "there" after "building" and replace with "in the plans"

Motion: (Henry, second Roy-Palmer) to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0-1 (Connolly abstained).

5). Board of Selectmen Report:

Mr. Connolly said the board is starting to talk about next year's budget.

Mrs. Hardin asked when they would like to have the proposed budget "buttoned up".

Mr. Connolly said that the Town Administrator plans to instruct the dept. heads to begin working on the dept. budgets on Sept. 1 and that the Selectmen would like to finish it in Dec.

Mr. Orvis asked for the total budget amount for the EDC.

Mrs. Hardin said it had been \$500 but was reduced to \$300. She said that so far they have spent \$30 and will probably spend another \$50 this year and that they would have to see what will be needed for the signs for the Adopt-a-Spot Program.

Mr. Henry asked about the \$30 already spent.

Mrs. Hardin said that was a line item transfer from the EDC to the Town for rental of a space at Hay Day.

6). Planning Board Report:

Mr. Henry said that the business owner that was moving from one location to another on Route

11 had his last meeting before the board and received site plan approval contingent on completing some paperwork.

He said someone came before the board for a conceptual discussion for a currently vacant property on Route 11. The potential buyer would raise the existing building and build a new building in the same footprint and bring in a used car dealership, a fresh fish market and an ice cream stand. He also has some longer term plans to develop the back of the property he said. Mrs. Hardin asked if this person has already purchased the property or if he came to the board to discuss his plans before buying the lot.

Mr. Henry said the man came to the board prior to purchasing the property and that he would need a Variance from the zoning ordinance to have more than one principal use on the lot. He said he did not know if he has been before the Zoning Board of Adjustment yet and that the Planning Board was generally supportive of the plans for the site.

7). ATV Report:

Mr. Orvis said there have been no real changes since last month's report where he reported that he had spoken with the New Durham Board of Selectmen and that they asked the Tri-City ATV Club members to provide them with an official request to install a trail system detailing the proposed locations in their town. They were very receptive to the idea, as were the Farmington Selectmen he said.

He said Johnson's Restaurant in New Durham signed up to become an anchor to the north end of the trail system and that many people has spoken to would like to be able to take the trail to Johnson's when deciding to eat there.

He said he envisions the trail would run parallel to Ten Rod Road with spurs enabling the riders to get to Crowley's Variety and Grill downtown and to the Irving Gas Station on Route 11 to help increase economic activity in Farmington and New Durham.

Mrs. Hardin asked how the riders would get over the river.

Mr. Orvis said he didn't yet know the exact location of the trails but at some point they would need to cross the Mad River in New Durham and they may come down to Hornetown Road and ask the Farmington Selectmen if they could use about 200 ft. of Hornetown Road and cross the river at the Hornetown Road bridge.

Mrs. Hardin asked how they planned to get from the main trail to Crowley's.

Mr. Orvis said they would probably ask the state if they could use the bridge near the market.

We don't know yet and we have to figure out where the trail could go as they receive permission from landowners in the area he said.

He said the group is also looking at how to cross the Spaulding Turnpike and connect the existing trail in Somersworth to the trail in Farmington.

Mr. Orvis said the ATV Club will have a booth at Hay Day and they are looking to get out in front of landowners and tell them of the benefits of allowing a trail to pass over their property and if one property owner signs on their neighbors may follow suit and there may be enough willing

landowners to link them into a trail system. We are trying to keep money that is going up to Jericho in town and bring more money to town he said.

8). TIF District Advisory Board Report:

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that it is difficult to get everyone together during the summer so she is planning to schedule their next meeting for December.

9). Old Business:

a). Request For Proposals (for the old Fire Station site) – Mrs. Hardin said the Farmington Revitalization Steering Committee compiled all of the information they gathered and presented it to the Board of Selectmen at their July 22 meeting. She said she felt that it was generally well received by the board and there will be further discussion at the board level which will begin in non-session so everyone will see the finished product at the same time and avoid giving anyone the advantage of getting a head start on their proposal.

Mr. Connolly clarified that the RFP would be created in non-public session.

Mrs. Hardin said she would update the committee as the project moves forward.

Mr. Connolly said the Selectmen appreciate all that the Steering Committee has done and thanked them on behalf of the board. We may be knocking on their door for more information as we go along he said.

b). Adopt-a-Spot – Chairman Hardin gave the members copies of the officially approved program application and guidelines which now includes a liability waiver added by the Town Attorney. It has been approved by the Selectmen and they have also given the committee the “green light” to administer the program she said.

Mr. Connolly said a question arose about item #4 on Page 2 of the guidelines which states the EDC will deny any application from any group whose purpose is to support/oppose political candidates, supports passage/non-passage of a piece of legislation or advocates for/against a public policy agenda. He asked if this would prevent Town or School unions or political groups in town from adopting a spot.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said this was probably added by the Town Attorney and the committee should seek clarification from her.

Chairman Hardin said that is what she planned to do.

Mr. Orvis said that anyone who is making an application to do this their primary purpose should be beautifying Farmington and he didn't care if they put up a sign to run for office as he didn't see that as their primary purpose.

Mrs. Hardin said this is not necessarily for a union or a political group but is more for someone running for office and making it look like the EDC is part of their campaign or advocating a specific piece of legislation. She said it is important they get clarification because there are existing adopters who could fit into this category. She added she was not okay with telling someone who has been doing a good job that they can't do it anymore.

Mr. Henry said he read the statement to mean the purpose of the group itself as being political and not that the purpose of adopting the spot is for political reasons. He gave the examples of the National Rifle Association or Moveon.org as groups who push a political agenda and that it could be argued that labor unions' primary goal is to support workers but they tend to have a very large political component to them that advocates for particular policies.

Mr. York said one of the things adopters are not supposed to do is put up signs other than the one provided by the EDC.

Mrs. Hardin said many of the organizations have mission statements and if there was ever a question about a group's purpose they could ask to see their mission statement or look it up on the web.

Mr. Connolly said they also talked about the limited amount of information to be put on the signs such as the business/group name and their phone number.

Mrs. Hardin said the adopters are not allowed to put up other signs and she wanted to make sure they are not inadvertently excluding groups that are already doing a good job.

Mr. York noted that on Page 1 of the guidelines item #6 under "The following is not allowed so please do not:" says adopters may not install private signs.

Mr. Henry said some of the potential adopt-a-spots have large grassy areas where political signs have been routinely placed and not necessarily by the person who adopts the spot. The spots are public property and political signs get placed there such as in the little triangle at the end of Spring Street and Central Street he said.

Mrs. Hardin said that spot is not currently an adopt-a-spot but she would like to make it one.

Mr. Henry said he did not think you would be able to stop people from putting political signs there as it is a prime location.

Mr. Connolly said political signs are supposed to be there only for a limited time.

Mr. Orvis said he has been reading up on landowner liability and asked if the indemnification agreement was really necessary. He said there may be state laws that deal with these issues so the Town may be covered already.

Mr. Connolly agreed but that by having this agreement on file there would be less of a question if anything should happen.

Mr. Orvis said there are state laws where if private property is open for public use they can't come after the landowner.

Mr. Henry said the laws may change and if they do this agreement would give the Town some protection.

Mr. Orvis asked if the application is a license to do it forever or if it was good for a certain length of time such as 1 year or 5 years.

Mrs. Hardin said the committee went back and forth on this and based on the fact the committee couldn't reach an agreement and on feedback from the Selectmen they decided to just leave it as "Term desired". She said they would prefer at least a 1 year commitment from

the adopter but if someone said they only wanted to do it during the spring that would be accepted.

Mr. Henry said someone may only be interested in cleaning up an area and plant some trees and be done with it.

Mr. Orvis said someone may want to learn what their responsibility entails and may decide after a year that they don't want to or can't do it anymore.

Mr. Henry said it depends on the spot as well as it may not be a spot that is high maintenance and that doesn't require anything other than the occasional lawn mowing. Someone may come forward who is willing to do a one-time large undertaking and may be moving out of town after or it could be an Eagle Scout project so it is not so much a term commitment but a project he said.

Mrs. Hardin said they are not looking to make this more complicated. We need to formalize it, protect the Town and have certain guidelines in place so we can implement things she said.

Mr. Henry said this now looks like a set of rules and if he were to read this he would stop at about half way down the page and say that this is a hassle that he doesn't need. He suggested that the information regarding the sign for the adopter's business be moved closer to the top of the page and highlighted so that "What's in it for me?" can be answered fairly quickly.

Mrs. Hardin agreed to move the General Information section to the top of the page as it would only change the format and not the content.

Mr. Henry said that section should also list what can be put on their sign such as the business name and phone number and their choice of street address or website address.

Mr. Connolly asked if the committee decided on the size of the sign and what would be included on the sign at the previous meeting. He then asked if Mrs. Harding had an opportunity to get pricing for new signs.

Mrs. Hardin said she has not yet gotten prices for new signs and they have been discussing the existing signs at the Town shed. She estimated that the signs are about 5" x 12" in size and asked the members to look at the Woman's Club sign in front of TD Bank for an example of what they look like. She said they could consider upgrading to somewhat larger signs when they purchase additional signs depending on the price and what is available in the budget then.

Mrs. Hardin said she planned to look into the number of existing spots without a sign which would also have to be included in the upcoming budget proposal.

She said the next steps would be to put the guidelines and application on the Town website along with some pictures of existing adopted spots.

Mr. Henry said they may want to include that an aesthetically appropriate size sign will be used because they may have a large spot that would justify the use of a large sign.

Mr. Orvis said the size of the sign may also depend on the length of the company's name that is adopting the site and suggested that those with longer names be allowed to have a minimum size font.

Mr. Henry said his suggestion of aesthetically appropriate would let the committee make these

decisions.

Mr. Connolly said the reason he brought this up is because Mrs. Hardin is going to have to present a budget proposal and the purchase of these signs will have to be part of that budget.

Mrs. Hardin said she planned to distribute the guidelines and applications at Hay Day.

Mr. Henry said the map of the existing adopt-a-spots won't be ready in time for Hay Day and asked how they find the locations of those of spots.

Mrs. Hardin said she and the Town Administrator "brainstormed" a list of the current spots and she will be adding any spots that were missed and any new potential sites as well as she drives around town. She said she planned to get the conversation going at Hay Day and to see who may be interested in adopting a spot and that she will make a list of any suggestions for new spots for review by the committee.

Mr. Henry asked if private property could be adopted with the owner's permission or if it has to be public property.

Mrs. Hardin said the committee previously decided that they would first focus on the Town owned spots and then work with the Selectmen and the Town Attorney as to how they would go about extending the program to private property.

Mr. Orvis said he has some maps he received for his trail work and that he could use them to compile a map of the existing spots.

Mrs. Hardin said she was approached by Dan Woodman of New England Furniture and he expressed interest in adopting the spot in front of the Municipal Building. She thanked Mr. Woodman for coming forward and said that she would speak with the current adopters-some of the Town employees in the building about potential change. She then said she would be remiss if she didn't give a plug to the businesses and homeowners in town that do a really good job with maintaining their property.

Mr. Connolly pointed out that the Goodwin Library is also doing their part to beautify the town. Chairman Hardin said she would pass the question onto the Town Administrator and ask him to get clarification from the Town Attorney.

c). Hay Day – Mrs. Hardin said the EDC booth will be right outside the TD Bank next to the bank's booth which will allow her to try to be in 3 places at once. She asked if any of the members will be available to assist with the EDC booth coverage on Saturday and what time they would be available.

Mr. York said he could be there from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Mr. Orvis said he was not sure where the ATV club's booth would located but if it was nearby he could help out at around 11 a.m.

Mrs. Hardin said she would contact Mrs. McKenny and see if she is available to assist with the booth coverage from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and that she could cover the EDC table after the bank closes at 1 p.m.

10). New Business:

a). Small Business Administration – Mrs. Hardin said she received a packet of information from a representative of the SBA and that he is interested in coming before the committee to do a presentation.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer suggested they invite him to be a guest speaker at an EDC meeting and to invite all of the businesses in town who would like to learn about what the SBA provides and what kinds of programs they have.

Mrs. Hardin said she would contact him and find out more information about the presentation, the availability of promotional materials to advertise the meeting and any other tips to encourage public participation.

Members then discussed the possible date, order of the agenda, the venue and advertising.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said her company, WEDCO has been awarded a grant to help expand business advising services and they could introduce the Small Business Development Advisor who would speak about what they do and the no-cost services they provide for businesses.

b). Job and Resources Fair – Mrs. Roy-Palmer said WEDCO and the NH Employment Security are hosting an Eastern Lakes Region Job and Resources Fair on Thursday, Sept. 12 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Great Hall upstairs at the Wolfeboro Town Hall. She gave the members some flyers advertising the event and asked them to post them at various locations in town. She said they are looking for employers wanting to hire new employees to have a table at the fair at no cost to them and they are also looking for people who are looking for a job to attend.

11). Any Other Business that may come before the Committee: None

12). Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 10, 2019

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Roy-Palmer, second Connolly) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 6:55 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Angela Hardin, Chairman