

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

Sharon McKenny, Secretary
Stephen Henry, Planning Brd. Rep. excused
Breanne Varney

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:

August 13, 2019 – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Connolly, second Roy-Palmer) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0.

5). Resignation:

Chairman Hardin announced that due to a career change member Breanne Varney has resigned from her seat on the committee effective immediately.

6). Board of Selectmen Report:

Mr. Connolly said the Selectmen are having preliminary discussions on the budget proposal for next year and are reviewing policies and updating them where necessary. He said they also have had preliminary discussions about the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the old firehouse property but have not yet started putting it together.

Mrs. Hardin asked for an update on the open Town Planner position and if any applications have been received.

Mr. Connolly said he was not aware of any applications being received and that the position is being filled one day a week by contract Planners from Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

Mrs. Hardin asked about the Planning Dept. Secretary position.

Mr. Connolly said the title for the position was changed to Land Use Assistant and she is a Town employee. He said that earlier this year the board increased her work hours to provide more coverage in the Planning Dept. office.

7). Planning Board Report:

In Mr. Henry's absence, Mrs. Hardin reported that the Planning Board is in the process of updating the Master Plan. She said there is a survey out which is available by link on the Town website and paper copies are available at various town businesses and at the Town Offices. She said the goal is to have 1,000 surveys completed and that she did not have a count of how many surveys have been completed so far. She noted that if the survey is taken online the site will recognize the IP address of the device being used to take the survey and will only accept one survey from that device. She advised if there are multiple adults in the same household each one would have to use a different computer or other device to take the survey or submit a paper copy.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer asked if there will be an economic development chapter in the Master Plan.

Mrs. Hardin said there will be some economic development components in the plan but she did not know what the final form would be.

Mr. Connolly said the survey includes questions about economic development.

Mrs. Hardin said the goal of the revised plan is to make it more implementable so it will not be some 50 page document that will end up on a shelf somewhere. They want it to be more concise and more actionable than the previous plan she said.

She said that once the Planning Board gets through this phase there may be an opportunity for the EDC to meet with Arnett Development Group to have a conversation with them about future economic development plans for the town.

8). TIF District Report:

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said there was no update at this time.

9). ATV Club Report:

Mr. Orvis said the club had a booth at Hay Day and it went well even though they were located on the outskirts of all of the vendors and they didn't get as much attention as they would have had they been located in the square.

Mrs. Hardin said it was a tough Hay Day this year due to the weather being rainy and drizzling which hampered the turnout.

Mr. Orvis said there are a lot of people in town who would like to have ATV trails. He said he has not been able to get out to the landowners and get permissions to establish the trails due to recent health problems and the need to supplement his income with some part time work. He said he plans to try to put together a committee from the club members to help him with these tasks. He said he would like the local riders who have permission to ride on properties in this area to contact him and introduce him to those landowners so they can start linking the trails together.

Mr. Orvis said there are 18 miles of trails in Rollinsford but there are really only 12 usable miles because one of the landowners closed their part of the trail due to muddy conditions following

the recent rains. He said the problem was aggravated by riders going around the mud holes creating new mud holes which resulted in the owner closing off his section in the middle of trail. He added that in New Hampshire riders are not supposed to put their wheels in the mud according to state wetlands laws and the club tries to find a way to cross those areas without damaging them.

10). Old Business:

a). Adopt-a-Spot – Mrs. Hardin said following their last meeting the Town Attorney agreed to remove item #4 which says the EDC will deny any application from any political groups especially after she pointed out that there is already a political group adopting a spot in town. She said they will use their best judgment for any groups of this type going forward.

Mr. Connolly said if any issues arise they will re-address this issue.

Mrs. Hardin said now that paperwork has been finalized she would like the members to step up and help with some of the tasks related to administering the program. She gave the members a spreadsheet containing the current spots, adopters and their contact information if known and suggested that the best way to start organizing the program was through a letter sent to the current adopters. The adopters would receive the cover letter, the guidelines, liability waiver and an application in the mail to complete and return to the committee. She then read the letter aloud for the benefit of the viewing audience.

Mr. York suggested that “for the program” be removed from the end of the third sentence so that it reads “Enclosed are the application, liability waiver and the formal guidelines”.

Mr. Orvis asked if the committee assumed or was tasked with the responsibility for administering the program and who had this responsibility previously.

Mrs. Hardin said the committee asked to administer the program and that previously it was loosely run by various committee members or people in the administration.

Mr. Orvis asked if they planned to promote the program on the local cable TV channel, Face book, etc.

Mrs. Hardin said she planned to get to promoting/advertising the program eventually. She said it would be easy enough to get the forms posted on the Town website but that she would like to have a separate page for the EDC and post pictures of currently adopted sites and spots available for adoption there.

Mr. Orvis suggested that Cable TV Coordinator Robert Hall produce commercials about the spots for use on Channel 26.

Mrs. Hardin said she liked the idea but suggested they get organized first before advertising for new adopters.

Consensus of the committee was to move forward with the cover letter.

Mr. York asked about the question marks in the adopter column next to some of the spots on the spreadsheet.

Mrs. Hardin said the 2 welcome sign spots are being maintained by someone but she was not

sure who.

Members said they believed those spots are being maintained by the Woman's Club.

Mrs. Hardin said she would check with Ann Titus who is a member of the club.

She said that the owner of Steve's Lawncare has been maintaining 3 spots in town for many years and has informed her that he is ready to "pass the torch" for the care of those spots onto someone else. She said she told him they would try to find someone else to take over for him.

Mrs. Hardin said the spots listed on the spreadsheet with nothing next to them are the committee's ideas for possible new spots to be adopted. She explained that the "PP?" next to Vision Park, Sarah Greenfield Business Park and the Farmington Childcare Center stand for "private property".

Mr. Connolly said the Childcare Center property is owned by the Town and Community Action Partnership leases the building and grounds from the Town.

He said the Town contracts out for mowing the lawn at the Public Safety Building and suggested that they contact the Police and Fire Chiefs for their thoughts before adding anything around the existing sign. It would probably need to come to the Selectmen for approval he said.

Mr. Orvis said he would bring this up at the **Conservation Commission** meeting the next night because the signs at some of the conservation properties are getting grown in.

Mr. Connolly said this should be the commission's responsibility.

Mr. Orvis agreed and said there are enough conservation properties now that they could use some citizen help to do that and that citizens could adopt those areas.

Mrs. Hardin suggested they have trail cleanup days similar to the Con Com's spring and fall cleanup of the town roads.

Mr. Orvis said they need someone to weed-whack around the entrances and signs every couple of weeks similar to the adopt-a-spots where the adopter mows and trims the area.

Mr. Connolly said a few years ago the Con Com contacted the state and had numbered street addresses assigned to the conservation properties on Hornetown Road, River Road and 2 on Bay Road and a member made the signs which came out "awesome". He said maintenance around those street signs is an issue because it is important for emergency responders to be able to know where the property is in the event of an emergency.

Mrs. Hardin said if the Con Com wants to come up with a similar program to the Adopt-a-Spot program such as an "Adopt-a-Sign" program they can "steal" the EDC's work. She added that they already know that the Board of Selectmen is okay with it.

She then asked the members for help with making phone calls to get quotes for how much the signs for the spots will cost. She said the metal signs that the Town already has are about 12" x 14" in size, are reflective and can be painted and lettered. She said the DPW Assistant said they have a few signs at the town shed that the committee can have as they are not being used by the DPW.

Mrs. Hardin said going forward she would like the signs to be as uniform in appearance as

possible and she would like to find a vendor for similar signs who could provide them to the committee in the most cost effective manner. She said she took a picture of sign at one of Steve's Lawncare spots and read that it says "This spot adopted by Steve's Lawncare" and there is no room left for a web address or phone number as previously discussed by the committee.

Mr. Connolly volunteered to get some price quotes for the signs.

Mr. Orvis said he would like to see some of the local sign companies participate in this project.

Mrs. Hardin said she has obtained the contact information for the 2 sign companies in town and one in Middleton and would forward the information to Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Connolly said the committee had discussed that the size of the signs for the spots could possibly differ because of the length of the business/group name and that they are offering to add additional information on the signs.

Mrs. Hardin said ideally she would like to see the signs also contain the Town seal and say Farmington Adopt-a-Spot.

Mr. Connolly asked if the EDC has a logo.

Mrs. Hardin said the committee does not have a logo. She then asked Mr. Connolly to get some ideas for the different types and sizes of signs and fonts available and their costs which will be helpful in setting the committee's budget request for next year.

Mr. Orvis said he would rather have the same size lettering for all of the business/group names with a bigger sign than all the same size signs with different font sizes.

Mr. York said they would want the signs to be reusable so if someone stops tending a spot the sign could be used by the next adopter.

Mr. Connolly said his concern with proportionality would be with someone with a long business name who wants to adopt a small spot ending up having a sign that is bigger than the spot. He said they would have to look at this on a case by case basis when reviewing the application.

Chairman Hardin then asked for volunteer(s) to drive around and take pictures of the current and proposed spots to be posted on the website.

The members agreed to take pictures of the spots when they are in the areas and then e-mail them to Mrs. Hardin who will compile them into one disc or USB drive.

b). SBA Presentation – Mrs. Hardin said she e-mailed Small Business Administration Veterans Business Development Officer Miguel Morales and he is in Rhode Island conducting some training classes. They will be in contact next week about the possibility of a SBA presentation at a future EDC meeting she said.

c). EDC at Hay Day- Mrs. Hardin said Hay Day at the EDC booth went very well. She said they hosted Arnett Development Group who provided some interactive poster boards where people were able to choose priorities in several categories and what they would like to see downtown by placing dots next to their choices.

She said they also handed out paper copies of the survey or the link to the online survey and talked to people about it.

d). Eastern Lakes Region Job & Resource Fair – Mrs. Roy-Palmer reminded everyone about the job and resource fair taking place in the Great Hall of the Wolfeboro Town Hall, S. Main Street, Wolfeboro from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 12. She said 23 businesses will be participating as well as representatives from other resources.

11). New Business:

a). Future Fishing Tournament – Mr. Orvis said there is a lot of money involved with fishing and asked if there are enough opportunities in town to sponsor some type of fishing tournament. He suggested the Mad River after it has been stocked, the Cocheco River or Baxter Lake as potential locations for the tournament.

Mr. Connolly said he would give Mr. Orvis' idea some thought.

Mrs. Hardin said they could also limit the participants to a younger age group.

Mr. Connolly said a few years ago he spoke with the Rec. Dept. about hosting a kid's fishing tournament and one of the issues with doing this was the availability of an area big enough to hold a tournament at any of the rivers or lakes because of the privately owned lands surrounding them.

Mr. Orvis cited other issues such rocky, slippery conditions that might make it difficult for kids to fish and that some of the fishing areas dry up once spring has past that could make holding a tournament difficult.

Mr. Connolly suggested Mr. Orvis may want to bring this idea before the Conservation Commission for their thoughts on the matter.

12). Any Other Business before the Committee: None

13). Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 8, 2019

14). Adjournment:

Motion: (York, second Roy-Palmer) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 6:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Angela Hardin, Chairman