

Town of Farmington  
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 12, 2020

**Committee Members Present:**

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

**Committee Members Absent:**

Sharon McKenney, Secretary  
Arthur Capello

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Hardin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:**

Due to the absence of both the Recording Secretary and the committee Secretary Mrs. Roy-Palmer volunteered to take notes and the meeting was briefly recessed to allow her to go get her laptop.

**4). Review of Minutes:**

January 14, 2020 – Page 2, first line- remove "requirements" and replace with "allowance" after "density".

**Motion:** (Henry, second York) to accept the minutes as amended passed 4-0-2 (Orvis, Connolly abstained).

**5). Board of Selectmen Update:**

**Old Firehouse RFP** - Mr. Connolly said the board has finished review of the proposed 2020 budget and will now focus on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the old firehouse property. He said to clarify what was stated last month there will be no Public Hearing before sending out the RFP. When it comes time to award the bid it will be an item on the agenda and the EDC could be involved when the responses are opened but that would be up to the Town Administrator he said.

**Hornetown Road Bridge** - Mr. Orvis asked how long the Hornetown Road Bridge would be closed for repairs.

Mr. Connolly said the board is meeting with the engineer next Monday night to discuss the 3 options to repair/replace the bridge given to the board by the engineering firm. He said the options range from installing a temporary bridge at a cost of about \$350,000 to a full

replacement with a new bridge at a cost of about \$1.5 million. The biggest difference with the options is the life span of each alternative and the temporary bridge has a life span of 10-15 years he said.

Mr. Orvis asked if they were thinking of putting in a temporary bridge next to the existing bridge for use while the bridge is being repaired similar to temporary bridge that was put in next to the Main Street Bridge to allow traffic to pass while it was being built.

Mr. Connolly said he did not think there was enough room for that at the Hornetown Road location and that the crossing would be completely closed until the work is completed.

Mrs. Hardin asked about plans to allow emergency vehicles to get to Hornetown Road while the bridge is closed.

Mr. Connolly said they have contingency plans and that Strafford County Dispatch and the neighboring towns have been notified to seek alternate routes to that area.

Mr. Henry said he thought the River Road Bridge had been down posted to an 8 ton weight limit meaning fire trucks could not use that bridge either.

Mr. Connolly said the fire trucks can use the River Road Bridge as it has not been down posted and is still posted at 15 tons.

He said the Selectmen had not planned to meet next Monday due to the Presidents' Day holiday but are meeting with the engineer due to the importance of this issue. We have enough money in the Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) now to put in the temporary bridge but we need to weigh all of the facts first and decide if a temporary bridge is worth the cost or should we spend another \$10,000 - \$20,000 and get the next step bridge he said.

Mrs. Hardin asked if they would have to float a bond for the bridge.

Mr. Connolly said the town would probably have to float a bond for the bridge work.

Mr. Henry noted that it is too late to go to Town Meeting with a bond proposal but they could apply for the state bridge aid.

Mr. Connolly said the board has discussed that too but that money is reimbursed to the Town after the funds are spent to fix the bridge.

Mr. Henry asked if the Town floats a bond for the work if we would be likely to get the reimbursement.

Mr. Connolly said he did not know the answer to that question. These are all questions the board is already thinking about he said.

#### **6). Planning Board Update:**

**Zoning Amendments** - Mr. Henry said the board held the second Public Hearing on the proposed zoning amendments and after the hearing some changes were made. He said that originally they had proposed creating a sub-district in the Village Center (VC) but that idea was scrapped so any of the proposed changes will apply to the entire VC.

He said one of the amendments would increase the residential density, which is currently 1 unit for every 5,000 sq. ft. of land, to using the building size (1 unit for every 800 sq. ft. of gross area)

and a minimum unit size (600 sq. ft.) to determine the number of units that would be allowed in the building. This would apply to the floors above the first floor of the buildings only and the first floor of any new construction or renovation of the first floor of existing buildings would be restricted to commercial use only anywhere in the VC he said.

Mrs. Hardin asked if these changes were all included in one proposed amendment.

Mr. Henry said these changes are all in one amendment so if you want to increase the density you would be requiring commercial uses only on the first floor and vice versa.

Mr. Connolly asked about properties there that currently have residential uses on the first floor.

Mr. Henry said anything that exists today can stay the way that it is.

Mr. Connolly asked what would happen if that property was sold to a new owner.

Mr. Henry said the existing uses could stay and this would apply if the building was redeveloped.

Mrs. Hardin asked if a residential use changes to a commercial use if it could never go back to a residential use.

Mr. Henry said that is correct. He said there is one property in the VC that is a residence with a business attached to the side of it and he did not know how this would affect that situation.

Mr. York said the building where his shop is located has residential units in the back of the building.

Mr. Henry said if those units did not already exist they would not be allowed to be put in and the fact that they exist now they would be grandfathered in (if the amendment passes).

**Accessory Dwelling Units** - Mr. Henry said that ADU's are addressed in a different amendment which removes the requirement to come before the Planning Board for an ADU site plan approval just as no site plan approval is required to build a duplex or a second home on an existing lot that meets subdivision requirements. He said an ADU has less of an impact than a duplex as the building owner of the ADU has to live in one of the 2 units which is not required with a duplex.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer said in other communities that have adopted this provision no applicants have come forward to make use of it.

Mr. Henry said Farmington has had a number of ADU applicants over the past few years. He said the state requires the Town to allow ADU's but it allows the Town to regulate them to some degree. He said they increased the maximum unit size from 750 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft. and set a minimum unit size which didn't exist before.

He said this proposal would also allow detached ADU's which is not currently allowed. If you have a detached garage you could put in an ADU upstairs over the garage but you couldn't build a cottage for use as an ADU he said.

**Accessory Structures** - Mr. Henry said there would also be some changes to the definitions of primary use to include other buildings in what qualifies as a primary use. Garages and barns would become a primary use but it has to be on an abutting property to be permitted by right.

If you have a lot somewhere in town that is not next to your residence it would be permitted by Special Exception (SE) he said.

He said there is also an amendment addressing campers and recreational vehicles. They will be allowed on a vacant lot with a permit that has a specific start and end date and if there is a cost for the permit the fee will be up to the Board of Selectmen. You wouldn't be able to live in a RV year round but that could change if there is a building permit for someone building a house he said.

**Parking Requirements** - Mr. Henry then returned to the downtown area and said that one of the biggest challenges there is parking so they will be looking at updating the parking requirements in the Site Plan Review regulations. He said that not every property will benefit from the increased density because they don't have the land for parking but there is undeveloped land that could be developed and incorporate the parking.

He said there is an existing parking issue that we can't fix by changing the density. If we do nothing we are still going to have a parking issue there he said.

Mr. Orvis raised the issue of "Tiny Houses" and that they are more substantial than a camper and are basically a miniature mobile home at approx. 400 sq. ft. and that he didn't see why they shouldn't be allowed as well as long as they have the proper septic system, water, etc.

**New Business Coming** - Mr. Henry said that although it hasn't come before the Planning Board yet, a new bakery is coming to downtown. He said the owner currently makes cakes for all occasions and hopes to expand her menu in the future.

Mrs. Hardin said the bakery will be located where the Broken Lance used to be in the smaller of the 2 units left in the building where Mr. Henry's Yard Sale Shop is located.

## **7). Old Business:**

**a). ATV Trails Update** – Mr. Orvis said he met with the New Durham Board of Selectmen last Monday with the goal of starting the trail at Johnson's Restaurant in New Durham and ending it on a property on Libby Road in New Durham not far from the Farmington town line.

He said they are trying to get permission to use about 4-5 miles of class VI roads from the New Durham Selectmen, from 2 landowners to cross their lots and from the state to use about 1.5 miles of the Route 11 right-of-way that the snowmobiles currently use.

Mr. Orvis said the next step is to put together a formal application of exactly which sections of the roads they want to use as part of the trail and a proposal to participate in the summer maintenance of those roads.

He said he is promoting the trails as part of the economic development in New Durham just as he is in Farmington. He asked the committee for a letter of support to include as part of the package that will be presented to the New Durham Selectmen when they officially request the use of their class VI roads as part of the trail system. He said the New Durham Selectmen are on board with the idea and their Rec. Dept. Director will work with the club on the project and they are hoping to have that section of the trails up and running by the end of the summer.

Mr. Orvis said they are considering starting the Farmington section of the trail at the New Durham town line and then closely follow the Mad River and may need to get permission from the Farmington Board of Selectmen to use the Hornetown Road Bridge to cross the river. The remainder of the trail could potentially run from Hornetown Road to Pound Road and include connections to the Farmer's Kitchen, the Irving gas station and the downtown area and down through Charlie King's property to Route 11 and possibly to the railroad bed to get to Rochester he said.

Mr. Henry asked why the railroad bed is so hard to get access to.

Mr. Orvis explained that the state purchased the land from the railroad using federal money which prohibits the use of wheeled vehicles on the railroad beds. He said to lift that restriction they can apply for a waiver or pay the money back to the federal government and that both options literally require an Act of Congress. He said there are similar issues going on in Claremont and Woodsville and once they are taken care of the Bureau of Trails will assist them with trying to open the Farmington section of the railroad beds if we have a trail leading to it.

Mrs. Hardin asked the members if there was any reason why she couldn't work with Mr. Orvis to draft a letter of support for the trail system.

**Motion:** (Henry, second York) to draft a letter a letter of support;

**Discussion:** Mr. Henry asked who would write the letter.

Mrs. Hardin said she would write the letter with assistance from Mr. Orvis.

Mr. Orvis said he would provide some language from other letters of support he has received to assist Mrs. Hardin with drafting the letter.

Mrs. Hardin said she would provide the letter to the committee for review and then submit it to the Selectmen for their approval before it goes anywhere else.

Consensus of the members was to allow Mrs. Hardin and Mr. Orvis to draft the letter and then send it to the Selectmen without committee review.

Mr. Connolly said he would abstain from voting on this motion as the letter will be coming before the Selectmen.

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0-1 (Connolly abstained).

**b). TIF District Advisory Board/EDC Appointments** - Chairman Hardin said that at the previous meeting Mrs. Roy-Palmer informed the members that she will no longer be a member of the EDC once her term is up which means the TIF District board will need a new rep. from the EDC. She said that Arthur Capello was appointed to the EDC and could be the EDC rep. to the TIF board.

Mrs. Hardin and Mr. Henry said they contacted individuals to see if they were interested in becoming EDC members and one positive response has been received so far. Applications are available on the Town website or at the Municipal Office Building and are reviewed and approved by the Selectmen she said.

**c). Small Business Development Center**- Mrs. Hardin reported that Certified Business Adviser

Amy Sterndale will be available at the Friends of Farmington building on the second Wednesday of each month for a trial period. She said today was the first day and that no appointments were scheduled with Ms. Sterndale. An online link will be added to the Town website and several locations to post flyers were discussed.

#### **8). New Business:**

**a). Meeting with SRPC –** Mrs. Hardin said that she, Mr. Capello and Strafford Regional Planning Commission Interim Planner Kyle Pimental met to discuss options for sidewalks and water/sewer infrastructure. Discussion included funding sources such as Community Development Block Grant, US Dept. of Agriculture and the NH Dept. of Environmental Services. She said they need to find out how to raise any matching funds and how much will be needed. Mrs. Roy-Palmer said that CDBG grants are highly competitive, the funds must be used to benefit low to moderate income persons and there are funding priorities. She said applications are accepted twice a year and that she would send Mrs. Hardin the online link to grant website.

**b). CRF Discussion –** Mr. Henry said there is no CRF established for the repair/replacement of sidewalks but there is about \$20,000 in the Town budget for that use.

Mrs. Hardin said that SRPC may be able to access funding for an initial study of the sidewalks. Members discussed possibly expanding the sidewalk system and the need to take care of the sidewalks we have now.

#### **9). Any Other Business to Come Before the Committee:**

**Sarah Greenfield Business Park-** Mr. Connolly said he has the original meeting minutes which state that the proceeds from the sale of the lots was intended to pay for the infrastructure in the park. He said the purpose of Article #31 on the Town Meeting Warrant is to establish a CRF and deposit the funds in the fund so they can be used as originally intended. He added typically the developer puts in the infrastructure.

Mrs. Roy-Palmer reported that the Town/WEDCO partnership for the development of the Commerce Park included that the water and utilities were installed up to the entrance of the property and they were responsible for them from there into the park.

Mr. Henry said an application submitted to the Planning Board from the paving company planning to locate in Sarah Greenfield was denied due to the length of time that has passed since the application was submitted and that the site plans were hand drawn and not to scale. He said the property owner is aware of and understands the board's action.

#### **10). Next Meeting:**

Mrs. Hardin said the next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 6 p.m. which is also the election day portion of the Annual Town Meeting and asked if the members wished to reschedule the meeting.

**Motion:** (Connolly, second Orvis) to reschedule the March meeting to Tuesday, March 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. passed unanimously.

**11). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Orvis, second Connolly) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:56 p.m.

Thank you to Mrs. Roy-Palmer for her assistance with these minutes.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon,  
Recording Secretary

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Angela Hardin, Chairman