

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 15, 2022
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Committee Members Present

Penny Morin, Selectmen's Rep, Acting Chair
Danielle Harris
Dan Woodman
Taylor Crawford
Adam Giles
KJ Cardinal

Others Present:

Kelly Heon, Administrative Assistant

Committee Members Absent:

Chad York
Stephen Henry, Planning Board Rep
Jason Lauze

1). Call to Order:

Mrs. Morin called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comments: None

4). Review of Minutes:

October 11, 2022-Public Session- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Cardinal, second Woodman) to accept the minutes passed 5-0-1 (Giles abstained).

5). Reorganization of the Board:

Mrs. Morin asked for a motion to nominate someone for Chairman and hearing none then made the following motion:

Motion: (Morin, second Cardinal) to nominate Danielle Harris for Chairman passed 5-0-1 (Harris abstained).

Mrs. Heon said their bylaws call for a Chairman, Vice Chairman and a Secretary.

Mrs. Harris took over the Chairman's position and called for nominations for a Vice Chairman.

Motion: (Morin, second Woodman) to nominate Taylor Crawford for Vice Chairman;

Mr. Crawford asked for the details on the role of the Vice Chairman.

Mrs. Morin said if Mrs. Harris is not present he would run the meeting and there is always somebody here who knows what the procedures are.

Mr. Crawford accepted the nomination.

a lot of boards have their own pages and it becomes difficult for the staff to try to maintain everything.

Mr. Cardinal said he could take this (EDC web page) all down and put it in a better format so they can all work on it. He said he could use Google Docs or a file and share it with the committee.

Mrs. Heon said it has to work within the frame work of this program.

Mr. Cardinal said for them to work on it he could just do it for the directory part of it and once they get all the information in they can go from there. He said this would be easy to create and he can help with this stuff.

Mr. Woodman asked if he could copy the format from another town.

Mrs. Heon encouraged the members to look at other Town's websites to see what they like in the formats they used. She said initially someone typed the businesses into something like an Excel spreadsheet and she has been trying to find it but she hasn't had much luck.

Mrs. Morin said she would check with Ann Titus as she was previously on the EDC when this was originally done.

Mrs. Heon said it has to be somewhere on someone's computer here.

Mrs. Morin said it probably would be easier just to recreate the document rather than going backwards and crossing out what is there

Mr. Cardinal agreed.

Chairman Harris said it sounds like either Mr. Crawford or Mr. Cardinal will take on putting it into a document.

Mr. Cardinal said he didn't mind doing that.

Mrs. Morin suggested they share their e-mail addresses and asked if everybody has a G-Mail account.

Mr. Cardinal said they would all be able to look at the list and cross about 20 of them off because there are a lot of them that don't exist anymore. He suggested the best way to start would be to weed out the ones they know and get it down to a list they can confirm so they won't have as many to call.

Mrs. Heon said also adding new ones and maybe there is some kind of form or letter they could send out and she didn't know if that many businesses would want to be included on the website but they may not even know it exists.

Mr. Cardinal said there should be something like a form they can fill out online and they could make a Google form that would automatically dump into a sheets file.

Mrs. Harris said it could be an online submission form that someone in the office could review.

Mr. Cardinal said it could be set so when someone submits something new it would e-mail you that there's a new entry. He said all that stuff can be set up and asked if the Town has a G-Mail account.

Mrs. Heon said they don't and she could talk to their IT person to see if they could set

comment on them and then things start running down a negative path. She said the Selectmen instituted this policy and she would get the members copies of the policy. I don't know if the EDC had their own Face book page if they would have to fall under those same rules but I would think so, so it might have to be an information only page and not allow comments she said.

Mrs. Morin said an information only page could have links to other pages.

Mr. Giles asked if they could get it to the members personally and then they could bring it to the table. He said that way it's rejecting any of the negative and try to bring the positive to the board.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't see why not. She said she would e-mail the members a copy of the social media policy before the next meeting.

Mr. Cardinal said they should start with an EDC G-Mail account first and then they can create other things off of that and it should be something that not all of them should be privy to the password.

Mr. Crawford said that might with reaching out to businesses because they might be more apt to respond to the EDC than to someone they don't know.

Mrs. Harris asked how they would start searching once they divvy up the business directory. She said they mentioned calling and they can also do a Google search and pull up the NH Directories and make sure they are a registered business and it would be good to double check with the Better Business Bureau to ensure anything they are promoting.

Mr. Cardinal asked if there was no way the Town to request business listings for the town. He said after the last meeting he tried to search for it and you can search for "Farmington" if it's in the businesses' name but it doesn't (give you all Farmington businesses).

Mrs. Heon said she has tried that multiple times and you can search for a lot of different things but you cannot search for businesses just within the Town of Farmington.

Mr. Cardinal asked if there was a way the Town could call them and ask for all the listings for the town.

Mrs. Heon said she could try that again and she believes she tried that in the past and the Secretary of State's Office said they don't identify them in that way.

b). EDC Newsletter- Mrs. Harris thanked Mrs. Heon for printing out a draft of the Farmington Economic Development Quarterly E-Newsletter and she has already started receiving input from some of the businesses. She said Planning Director Kyle Pimental was really helpful with the RSA 79-E information and they have 2 businesses that would like to be included-the Barber Shop and Nomad Studios.

Mr. Woodman suggested that the newsletters be made available in the lobby of the Municipal Office Building and noted that he always looks at the stuff they have off to the side when he comes into the building.

Mrs. Heon said they could print some and have them available here and suggested they put it on the Town website and on social media.

website.

Mrs. Heon said they could also dove tail with the Building Dept. as new businesses are supposed to register with the Town and that could be part of the process so once they are all set to go we ask them if they would like to be contacted by the EDC to have a ribbon cutting or if they would like to be on the website. She said they can do this for new businesses but for the ones that already established they might not know about them because they don't have all of the information on businesses that are older than a few years.

Mr. Cardinal asked how they would get that information from the Building Dept.

Mrs. Heon said they are working on having a directory.

Mrs. Harris said the Christmas tree lighting event is scheduled for Dec. 2 and if anyone happens to be there and there is any new imagery they could potentially switch that out.

Mrs. Heon said the Farmington Preservation and Improvement Organization would be thrilled with this write-up and she will touch base with them.

Mrs. Harris asked her to confirm with the FPIO that can use the photos they provided. She said they will be doing the newsletter on a quarterly basis so they should have it ready by Dec. 15. She said in the mean time they should work on the Face book page so they can post it there.

Mrs. Morin said they need an e-mail for the EDC as well.

Mrs. Harris asked Mr. Cardinal to set up the Google Docs and the G-mail under one account.

Mr. Cardinal said he would do that. He said it would be one e-mail account and then they could create the other accounts through it and use the Google suite of products that do everything else through there.

Mrs. Harris said then they would share the password.

Mr. Cardinal said the Town should have some sort of procedure in place for this and it seems weird that there is nothing in place to tell them what they can and can't do.

Mrs. Heon said she will check on it but they are a Town committee and some of the Town depts. have their own Face book page so she didn't think the EDC couldn't have its own Face book page and they need an e-mail to start it so it makes sense.

Mrs. Harris said she would work with Mr. Cardinal on setting up the Face book page.

7). UNH Cooperative Extension Recommendations:

Mrs. Harris said she was here for part of this and she would be happy to provide any background on it. She said a few years the Coop Ex. put a lot of time and work into the study and they were able to source this from UNH and these are the recommendations they came up with that were presented to the board members in 2019.

Mrs. Heon asked if the recommendations were specifically for revitalizing the downtown.

Mrs. Harris said yes and they had a lot of interesting ideas related to the Village District. She said UNH works with towns to help with revitalization efforts to help entice more businesses to come in.

Mr. Woodman asked how they do that and jokingly asked if they get a guy to go into a town to

Mr. Woodman said it looks really nice now and anybody can want a fantasy land with nice bricks, crosswalks for the kids and stuff like that but everything takes time. He said if the Town pressures these buildings that have garbage bags on them and start seeing them get it cleaned up that looks good instead of saying the downtown looks like crap. Now it's looking better and that's a good thing he said.

Mrs. Morin said having an attractive downtown will encourage more businesses to look at Farmington.

Mrs. Harris it has made a lot of progress over the recent years and is keeping on that trajectory where you start small and keep growing out.

Mr. Woodman said good business will always come into a nice building they're not going to move into a crappy building. He said in Rochester they talked about giving them tax relief if they put \$5,000 into their building.

Mrs. Heon said that is the program that Mr. Lauze used. She said his building is as if the assessed value of the building is frozen when he got approved for that program and he won't be taxed on all of the improvements he has made for 9 years. She said his building has obviously gained value by being rehabbed and that's money that could have gone into the Town's general fund but instead we're saying we wanted him to have the ability to do that and not have to pay the taxes for a certain amount of time. It's a tradeoff but it's something to give developers an incentive to come to downtown Farmington and spend money on rehabbing the buildings.

Mr. Woodman said nobody is going to put all that money into a building and then the taxes go up on that building. He said they would keep it a junkyard and then they wouldn't have to pay much in taxes. There are still a few more buildings that need to have that rehab he said.

Mrs. . Heon said he could go tell them about the program.

Mrs. Morin said they could showcase some of the Town's hiking trails in the newsletter and there are a lot of good things happening in Farmington that aren't just business. She said we have a lot of conservation land with a lot of places to walk and ride your bike if you want to. There's a lot happening here that people just don't know about she said.

Mrs. Harris agreed and said her husband just joined the Conservation Commission and it would be nice to highlight all of the trails in the future newsletters.

Mrs. Heon said she thought the Con Com would appreciate a little "PR" for them too.

Mr. Woodman said the 500 Club runs programs all year to keep the kids busy.

Mrs. Heon said they could also highlight the civic and volunteer organizations and for a little town there are a lot of organizations that are doing things in the background that people don't even realize.

Mrs. Harris said there has been some movement on the Farmington side of Blue Job Mountain.

Mrs. Morin said NH Firefighters are doing a controlled burn to control the crop of blueberries.

Mr. Crawford said he noticed that the American flag downtown doesn't have any up-lighting on it and he believes that it's part of the flag code to illuminate it at night.

Mrs. Morin said some volunteers recently put that flag up and they are waiting to hear from Public Service about moving a pole that might be in the way of taking it up and down. She said because of the size of the flag it is a struggle to get it up and down especially on a windy day.

Mrs. Harris asked about the budget process and funding as they find projects.

Mrs. Heon said we are in budget season now and they can present a budget as a committee to the Selectmen and the Budget Committee and she would have to look at past budgets to see what kind of a budget the EDC has had. She said they have to have a reason to have a certain amount of money and show what they are going to do with the money and it can't be just in case they need it.

Mr. Woodman asked what the EDC budget was in 2015.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't know and she could find out.

Mrs. Harris said they may be looking to do some things that haven't been done before and asked when the budget would have to be submitted.

Mrs. Morin said it would have to be submitted by December at the latest and they could propose doing a couple of small things and list them out and present them to the Selectmen.

Mrs. Heon said at the very least they need a budget for printing, doing the newsletters, mailings and things like that.

Mrs. Morin said they could fundraise for some of the things that they want.

Mr. Giles asked if sidewalks were part of the Town's responsibility because it is a safety concern.

Mrs. Morin said yes.

Mr. Giles said they could ask the town's opinion from businesses and people but when you present it for a Request for Proposals they have a certain budget every year to send those out.

Mrs. Morin said there is a list of demands on that one budget for roads, bridges and sidewalks that is just so big that they can't do them all at once but they are succession to be done.

Mr. Woodman asked who paid for the lights on the sidewalks leading to the schools.

Mrs. Heon said that was paid for by the Safe Routes to Schools grant. She said they could ask for a minimum amount for their budget and that there is a minimum amount that gets budgeted for economic development every year anyway but if they were talking anything significant they would need to have something written up to be presented to the Town Administrator and he would bring it to the Selectmen.

Mr. Giles asked if they could do promotions with the companies such as donating a bench to the town.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't see why not.

Mrs. Harris said there is a spot on Rt. 11 right before Cameron's that could use some greenery.

Mr. Woodman said that was an Adopt-a-Spot.

Mrs. Morin asked if the EDC was involved with the Adopt-a-Spot Program.

because we are really into budget season and they might not want to wait too long to at least start talking about it.

Mrs. Morin said they should all give their e-mail addresses to Mr. Cardinal so he can put the Google account together and share it with the committee.

9). Any Other Business That May Come Before the Committee:

Mrs. Harris said the agenda for the next meeting would include updates on the EDC budget and the business directory.

Mr. Woodman asked if they were not doing anything on the budget for this year because there is only one month left.

Mrs. Harris said the proposed budget would be for 2023.

Mrs. Heon said she could see how much money was budgeted for this year and if they can think of a way to spend it they might be able to spend it but she didn't think it was very much.

Mr. Woodman asked what they would need a lot of money for in a month and a half.

Mr. Crawford said they would need money to print the newsletter and if they print some type of card or postcard.

Mrs. Heon said she would ask if they could encumber the funds from this year's budget if there is anything there and they know they are going to have cards printed in January.

Mr. Giles asked how he could get a copy of the list of businesses on the Town website.

Mr. Cardinal said he would make some changes to the list and then he will e-mail a copy to him.

Mrs. Heon said she would see if somebody on the EDC could have a log-in to the Town website.

Mrs. Harris asked the members if there was anything else they want added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Consensus of the committee was to go over the newsletter and the digital accounts at the next meeting and to take small steps getting started.

Mr. Woodman asked for the goals of the subcommittees.

Mrs. Morin said 1 goal is to have a smaller group of the members work on organizing projects.

Mr. Giles asked if anyone has reached out to the high school to see about doing community projects.

Mr. Cardinal said that is a good idea as they have to have community service hours anyway.

Mrs. Morin said the Family and Consumer Science class made 50 pies for the Woman's Club Pie and Craft Fair and they are willing to work with every organization.

Mr. Woodman said the 500 Club worked with the Woodshop teacher and they made picnic tables for them every year.

Mrs. Morin said it would have been nice to have make benches for the town but there is no more woodshop at the high school.

Mr. Woodman said they got rid of the trade classes 6 or 7 years ago at the high school.

Mrs. Morin said those students go to Kingswood. She said when those classes went away the number of students using it didn't cover the cost to run the program.