

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, July 12, 2016

Committee Members Present:

Resta Detwiler, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice Chairman
Elaine Aylard, Committee Secretary
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep.
Randy Orvis
Martin Laferte, Planning Board Rep.

Others Present:

Town Administrator Arthur Capello
Admin. Asst. Erica Rogers

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Detwiler called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. She thanked the viewers for tuning in and asked them to consider joining the committee. She then welcomed Mr. Capello and Mrs. Rogers to the meeting.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Comment: None.

4). Review of Minutes:

June 14, 2016-

Motion: (Titus, second Laferte) to accept the minutes as written passed 6-0.

5). Old Business:

A). Table at Hay Day- Ms. Roy-Palmer will check her schedule to see if she can tend the committee's table at the event.

B). Newsletter Review- Members reviewed the monthly EDC News and Information newsletter

Motion: (Aylard, second Titus) to accept the newsletter as presented passed 6-0.

C). Planning Board Information- Mr. Laferte reported that the Planning Board held a second meeting with the agent for Aroma Joe's seeking approval to construct a drive-through coffee shop on Route 11 adjacent to the Wagon Wheel . The applicant has changed the original plan to construct a coffee shop and storage units to eliminate the storage units and the second entrance for the units. The revised plan also contains the addition of a 10 foot turning lane off Route 11 but the applicant has not yet received a DOT permit he said. The applicant/agent is scheduled to return to the board for further review later this month. Mr. Laferte said the Planning Board also met with the owner of a 23 lot subdivision located off Governor's Road to discuss the status of Richard's Way. The owner proposes the Town take ownership of Richard's Way but the development hasn't achieved 50% build out and the road has not been completed. The board discussed the process and requirements for the Town to take ownership of the road and then extended the requirement to lay the wear course of the road until June 2018 he said.

Mr. Laferte said the Planning Board did not discuss the TIF District at their last meeting.

D). Tax Increment Financing District- Mr. Capello told the committee that the Town is having a hard time getting members for the TIF Advisory Board. They have sent mailings seeking members to people that live in or own property in the district and adjacent to the district with no response. He said that Mrs. Rogers plans to go door to door within the district to speak to people about becoming a member of the board.

Ms. Roy-Palmer asked that since the Town owns property in the district could the Town appoint a representative to the board such as one of the Selectmen.

Mr. Capello said he will speak to Selectmen about it at their next meeting.

Mr. Capello added that part of the problem in getting responses to the mailings is because some of the property owners live out of state.

Mrs. Titus asked if these “out of towners” could have representation on the advisory board. Mr. Capello said he will have to check state law to provide an answer to her question.

Ms. Roy-Palmer asked if the terms for advisory board members are staggered. Mr. Capello said that the terms are staggered and that membership to the board is not something that will take up a lot of someone’s time. He said the Route 11 is growing and asked interested persons to contact the Municipal Office for more information about becoming a member of the board.

Chairman Detwiler said she will include a request for advisory board members on the front page of the next monthly newsletter.

Ms. Aylard asked if the town fails to get five board members and someone wants to put a business in the TIF District will they be able to get help from the TIF program.

Mr. Capello said a new business can come into the TIF District but the Town can’t spend any money in the TIF account for expansion of the sewer lines without a TIF Advisory Board.

6). New Business:

A). Donation to the Sign Project- Ms. Detwiler said she spoke with Mr. Capello about the committee making a \$200 donation to the Woman’s Club for the replacement of the “Welcome to Farmington” signs. Mr. Capello said the donation has been approved and the check will be drawn and sent to the Woman’s Club.

B). E-mail Correspondence- Mr. Capello advised the committee about the use of e-mail correspondence between members and asked if any e-mails were sent to and responded to by all of the members which would constitute a quorum and be considered a meeting of the committee. Mr. Orvis said he sent e-mails to all of the members regarding bringing natural gas to Town but no one replied back to him. Mr. Capello suggested copies of the e-mails be included in the meeting minutes.

7). Any Other Business:

A).Introduction- Mr. Capello introduced Welfare Director/Admin. Asst. Erica Rogers to the committee. He said she will also be assisting the committee with their tasks and asked the members to send any requests for her assistance to him which will then be forwarded to Mrs. Rogers.

B). Bylaws- Vice Chairman Roy-Palmer gave the members copies of the Farmington EDC By-laws for review.

8). Strategy Session:

Ms. Roy-Palmer began the session with some “Farmington Facts”:

The current tax rate is \$25.09 per thousand dollars assessed value.

Tax rates in NH range from \$7.00 to \$41.00.

In 2014, 13% of the Town's assessed value came from commercial land and businesses.

The median age for adults is 40.8 years.

NH has the oldest population in the nation which is up from #2 previously.

Approx. 13% of the Town's population is below the poverty level (914 people).

About 72% of working residents commute to another community for work.

The largest employers in Town include; the Farmington School District (228 employees), the Town of Farmington (75), TDS Telecom (44), Cameron's (40), Shafer Rolls (32), Pike Industries (30) and TD Bank (20).

The top five commercial property values are PSNH/Eversource (\$8,684,500), Power House Machine (\$4,035,474), Old Wave LLC (\$3,900,700), Farmington Family Assoc. (\$2,050,500) and the Ridge Limited Partnership (\$1,796,695).

Mr. Orvis spoke about a seacoast traffic study committee formed 25 years ago which found the highest traffic count then was on Route 4 in Chichester and the second highest count was found on Route 11 at the Rochester/Farmington town line.

Mr. Capello said a traffic count was recently conducted on several roads in Farmington for road maintenance purposes and he will provide the results to the committee as soon as he has an opportunity to analyze the report that was just received from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

Discussion included Farmington has an advantage in that traffic passes through the downtown core, daily/weekly traffic counts for Route 75 (2,390 cars/weekly), Main Street east and west bound (890 daily), Route 11 west (6,475 daily), Route 11 east (5,850 daily), Route 153 (4,428 daily) and Ten Rod Road (617 on a Friday, 1600 on a Thursday).

Mr. Orvis said if potential businesses knew the town has this much traffic passing through, there may be more potential for new businesses to come to town.

Ms Roy-Palmer then asked Mr. Capello to consider attending more EDC meetings citing the need for his participation and to team build as much as possible between the town administration and the EDC.

Mr. Capello said he will try to be available for as many meetings as possible and also suggested the committee let him know what information they need.

Ms. Roy-Palmer then asked the members to take a look at the tools the town has such as the three Economic Revitalization Zones, the TIF District and the 79-e District and how they wished to market them. Suggestions included advertizing them on the town web site, in the EDC monthly newsletter, as an insert in the tax bills and ask commercial realtors how to help market available commercial properties.

Mrs. Titus suggested asking a commercial realtor to speak to the committee at a future meeting.

Chairman Detwiler told the committee that the Somersworth EDC met with Business Resource Specialist Mark Laliberte of the NH Economic Development Advisory Council (NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Development- DRED) to discuss the dept.'s strategic plan to advise communities on the trends and needs of business and industry across all sectors. She suggested the Farmington EDC invite Mr. Laliberte to speak to the committee and invite business owners and the public to attend.

Ms. Roy-Palmer suggested the meeting be televised on the local cable TV channel as well. Ms. Detwiler will contact Mr. Laliberte to see if he is available to meet with the committee.

Mr. Orvis told the members he spoke with Dave Beaulieu in Business Development for Unutil about bringing natural gas to Farmington. He said Mr. Beaulieu told him natural gas is currently available as far as the Granite Ridge shopping center next door to the Wal-Mart store on Route 11 in Rochester and that the company would need to have a big anchor customer that is an industrial user of natural gas for them to bring the gas to Farmington. He said the company previously tried to convince Pike Industries to convert

to natural gas but were unsuccessful. Mr. Beaulieu said if Pike would agree to become a natural gas user the company would agree to extend the pipeline up Route 11 Orvis said.

Discussion included setting up a new TIF District to bring natural gas to town, find out if the existing TIF account can be used for any other utilities, most existing businesses on Route 11 use propane for heat only, how NH structures utility rates affects costs, have two or three members discuss converting to natural gas with Pike and other businesses and invite Mr. Beaulieu to speak to the committee.

Motion: (Laferte, second Orvis) to ask a gas company representative to attend the Sept. 13 EDC meeting passed unanimously.

Mr. Orvis will invite someone from the gas company to attend the Sept. meeting.

Ms. Detwiler and Ms. Roy-Palmer will visit local businesses to discuss bringing natural gas to town.

Members asked Mr. Capello to determine if the TIF account can be used for other utilities.

9). Next Meeting: August 9, 2016 at 6 p.m.

10). Adjournment:

Motion: (Laferte, second Aylard) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary