
Economic Development Advisory Committee 04/20/2015

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Paul Renaud

April 20, 2015

Members Present: PRenaud, AWood, JMoran, NNickerson

7:00 p.m. Meeting Opened

PRenaud asked the committee if there were any suggested changes to the minutes for last month's meeting. Hearing none, PRenaud motioned to accept the March 16, 2015 meeting minutes as written. NNickerson seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor.

Rescheduling of May Meeting Date

PRenaud advised the committee that the Planning Board has rescheduled its second May meeting date from May 25th to May 18th, because of the Memorial Day holiday. This necessitates the EDAC to reschedule the May meeting date, currently set for the 18th. After a brief discussion, it was agreed the committee meet on Tuesday, May 26th at 7:00 pm.

Charter Review

PRenaud stated that the charter which the committee adopted two years ago should be reviewed and possibly amended. This could possibly make it less restrictive for potential new members. He would like to focus specifically on Sections III, V, and VI.

Section III. TERM & MEMBERSHIP:

Subsection a: "One member shall represent the Planning Board" will remain as written.

Subsection b: "There shall be a minimum of two members of the business community". The committee agreed this clause is needlessly restricting for membership purposes. In reality, there has not been a second member of the business community on the committee for the past year. It was decided to omit the sentence in subsection b.

Subsection c: "A majority of the Committee shall be residents of Greenfield" will remain as written.

Subsection d: "All members and alternates shall serve a one year term. Reappointment of members and alternates are at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen." PRenaud says there has been no formal reappointment by the Select Board since the

committee began. We have all just informally agreed to continue for another year when asked by the Chair. After a discussion, AWood suggested omitting the first sentence to make it more open ended. JMoran suggested rewriting the second sentence as “All members serve at the pleasure of the Select Board”. NNickerson said this would make the committee more open to change. The committee agreed to the proposed changes in this subsection.

Subsection e: “There shall be a maximum of three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen” will remain unchanged.

Section V. MEETING DATES AND TIMES:

After a brief discussion about the frequency of committee meetings, it was decided to change Section V “The Economic Development Advisory Committee shall meet at least once monthly” to “... at least once bi-monthly.” PRenaud said this is typical of EDACs in other towns, some of which are much larger than Greenfield, who tend to meet bi-monthly or quarterly. This does not preclude the committee meeting monthly, but it gives us more flexibility in the necessary frequency of meetings. PRenaud said we’ll probably continue monthly for at least the next few months.

Section VI. CHAIRPERSON

PRenaud stated that we have yet to actually elect the Chair and Vice Chair at the March meeting as is currently required in the charter. It was agreed to delete the phrase “held in March” from Section VI. This will require the Chair and Vice Chair to be elected in any month in a calendar year.

PRenaud said the development of a long-range economic development strategy for the Town within the parameters of the Master Plan, as stated in ‘Section I. Purpose’ of the charter, will be something the committee will start to work on when the Master Plan Economic Development chapter is formally adopted, likely in the next several months.

AWood motioned to approve the proposed amendments to the charter. JMoran seconded. Motion carried unanimously. PRenaud said he will be presenting the proposed changes to the Select Board, along with many other items of business, before the next EDAC meeting. He advised that the changes to the charter are not official until the Select Board votes to accept them.

Broadband Planning

PRenaud informed the committee of his conference call with Jerry Hunter of CMRC and Brian Foucher of WiValley on March 31. CMRC will be obtaining a 500 Mb/s link from WiValley in the near future. Excess bandwidth would be available for purchase by businesses or residents in town. In addition, antennas could be installed on the CMRC tower to add fixed point wireless capability to areas in town with a clear line of sight to the tower. PRenaud said that he received an email from JHunter a few hours before the meeting stating that CMRC has signed a contract with WiValley. Build out plans and a timeline for the project are forthcoming. PRenaud further

said that BFoucher asked if the EDAC could speak to businesses in town to gauge the level of interest.

The committee felt it is not their job to do legwork for WiValley or any other internet service provider. Instead, the EDAC could act as an advocate to sponsor a town wide meeting of businesses and interested residents with ISP representatives. NNickerson stated it would be a good idea to get the people and the internet entity together and let the people decide. We would need to talk to the Select Board about this beforehand to get their permission.

AWood said that if residents are allowed to put antennas in trees on their property, only those in the shadow of a hill would not be able to get a signal from CMRC. This could be a way to get fast broadband to consumers and an avenue for small businesses to get decent bandwidth. However, he has concerns about the technical capability of WiValley to provide reliable service.

PRenaud would like to have the committee consider the possible necessity of an ordinance allowing RF transceivers to be installed in town, in light of the potential need for repeater sites. This could enable small neighborhood broadband cooperatives or other similar distribution methods to legally exist in town, especially in areas of town beyond the reach of DSL. He will bring some ordinance examples to the next meeting and we will begin to discuss the possible need for such an ordinance.

The committee decided it would act to facilitate a meeting between ISP providers and any interested parties in town – businesses, residents, school, and anchor institutions. The target time is late June. JMoran said we would need to do extensive promotional materials, such as posters, the newspaper, the Spirit, talking to people, maybe direct mailing.

PRenaud said he would try to meet with someone from Fairpoint in the next month or so to find out what, if any, are their plans in the region for the future. PRenaud and AWood have noticed new boxes and lines installed by Fairpoint recently at a few locations in town. Fairpoint is the only regional ISP that hasn't met yet with EDAC members. Now that their labor troubles are ended, maybe they can speak with us.

Other Matters

PRenaud stated his desire to inquire of future plans, if any, for the two largest industrially zoned areas in town. He will look into finding contact information for the Coville lots. If possible, he would prefer to talk to one of the owners or a trust fund representative by phone. JMoran said he would attempt to speak with someone at the VeryFine Co. about any plans for their 250 acre lot on Gulf Rd. PRenaud will also speak with the real estate agent for the Norah's Depot building and inform them of the possible availability of tax relief for the property through RSA 79-E.

PRenaud stated that the EDAC needs to consider giving an advisory opinion in the next few months on business

development in the town center. Included in this would be suggestions on the future of the condemned building lot on Slip Rd. which the town will be acquiring.

Next Meeting

Items to be discussed at the May meeting:

- PRenaud will gather some materials on Tax Increment Finance districts and present them to the committee for discussion
- Review JMoran's corporate executives survey document on business expansion and relocation
- PRenaud will present two fixed wireless accessory use zoning ordinance examples
- Plan for broadband event
- Discuss Select Board response

Items deferred to a later meeting:

- Review broadband matrix spreadsheet
- Review broadband funding resources

9:00 p.m. Adjournment

PRenaud motioned to adjourn. AWood seconded. Vote unanimous in favor.