
Economic Development Committee Minutes 04/18/2016

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Janice Pack

April 18, 2016

Members Present: Paul Renaud, Jack Moran, Andre Wood, Norm Nickerson

Meeting Opened: 7:01 PM

Minutes read by Paul Renaud, motion to accept by JMoran, seconded by NNickerson, all in favor.

Old Business: Going over last 2 meetings, the Committee discussed the pros and cons of Fairpoint and TDS. They discussed the packages available, the costs, the delivery and the correspondence received from Ellen Scarponi. NNickerson asked if anyone had experienced Fairpoint's upgraded service, and was it better and/or faster?

The Committee felt that TDS's technology was better, and while Fairpoint was trying to step up to the plate, they were using outdated technology. However, Fairpoint was awarded a contract in 2012 to build out with New England Telehealth Consortium (NETC). If we want to get TDS in here, it might be a problem. The NETC grant would enable the CMRC to get up to 85% of the upfront costs covered qualified.

Moving forward, what is the information we need to find out to make a final decision? TDS has 2 different business models: they need to expand their footprint here as it is new territory for them. Sending out a sales team to increase their market is one way. They might be willing to try harder to earn our business.

What about those residents who have just signed contracts with Fairpoint? JMoran feels we can't get involved with everyone's private business affairs. We can only continue to gather and share information.

Fairpoint is waiting for an answer and PRenaud isn't sure how to reply. JMoran says our job is to move both balls forward, not to help either one of them win; just to keep an even playing field. Feels our next step is just to get the word out to the general public.

NNickerson said "we're going to take the best deal we can get. Business is about word of mouth."

JMoran wants to know "what about front money?"

TDS was blatant in saying that we need to make financial commitment for them to put enough fiber drag in. Our position is an advantage. If they could get the main roads connected, and perhaps move to Peterborough, it would bring a larger return on investment for them.

One scenario would be to bring TDS in and have those who are using their service get the word out about how happy they are, and let word of mouth grow the service.

We would have to sign a cable franchise agreement, and get a grant or bond. TDS is the only company who has talked about bringing in cable TV. That in itself

could be a huge draw as well as a great ROI. We need TDS to finish their feasibility study. In the meantime, no one from Fairpoint has contacted AWood. He feels that if they meant what they said, they would've contacted him and taken action.

JMoran feels that it's time for both TDS and Fairpoint to step up to the plate. They should put a public notice in the paper and let the public know what they have available. We can't advertise for them but they should do the advertising, and give us copy that we can have for public record.

PRenaud will contact Scott and ask about the feasibility study. He asked if we could encourage direct competition by pushing TDS to go door to door on Route 31 to get new business. JMoran feels that TDS would not spend the money until they had bigger fish to fry, a bigger anticipated ROI.

The Committee discussed the survey, and what points it should include. They agreed that it needs to be a generic survey with no logo or brand name, unless either company wanted to do the survey themselves.

Town Broadband Report – PRenaud needs to compile a report of all of the companies that EDAC spoke to and make a presentation to the Select Board. Needs to list pros and cons of each, and make a recommendation. He is aiming for June/July. JMoran asked if it has to be written or could it be an oral presentation? The Committee feels that if we went before them and spoke to the progress that has been made, it would be easier/less time consuming than to do a formal written report, but there should at least be a written outline or agenda, listing the points of discussion.

New Business: The Rymes lot in the Business District. The old gas station and the house to its left are all on the same lot. Because of the ordinance passed last month, it is now a conforming lot. They may want to subdivide the lot now. Ray Cilley inquired about the lot, but PRenaud isn't sure what his plans are. The Committee felt that he should go to the Select Board with his questions.

Hearing no more business to discuss, AWood motioned to adjourn. This was seconded by NNickerson and all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM