

Economic Development Advisory Committee 05/26/2015

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Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Sharon Rossi

May 26, 2015

Members attending: JMoran, PRenaud, AWood

Also attending: Brigid Wood

7:00 p.m. Meeting Opened

PRenaud motioned to accept the April 20, 2015 meeting minutes as written. JMoran seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor.

Broadband event:

A late date in June was suggested at the last meeting to hold a broadband informational meeting with various businesses, residents and vendors. Unfortunately, PRenaud is not able to attend or plan this event in June due to other commitments. He wants to meet with Fairpoint first, and then hold the event in late Sept. He has found that the Fairpoint public relations or communications rep is the person that he has to contact. He informed the committee that CMRC has a contract with WiValley and that it is a possibility for town residents to obtain service as well, but more detailed information is needed from Brian Foucher. PRenaud is still maintaining a plan for a town wide event and has talked to JFletcher about promotional materials and advertising. KDay will let us have an article in the Spirit for this event. Tentative dates for the event are 23rd or 30th of September. Broadband commitments for the event can be done outside of our regular meetings via phone or e-mails.

The Master Plan ED chapter section on Utilities and Infrastructure Needs covers the broadband planning and support funding needed for implementation. PRenaud asks the committee to consider what a vision should be for town broadband goals.

Notes on vision for broadband:

- Offer it to anyone that wants it, letting the residents and businesses decide what they want
- Concentrate on the areas in town that are unserved or
- Go for fiber all over town.

- Add a statement to the ED chapter in the Master Plan saying “the EDAC would like fast internet for small businesses so that they may grow.”
- Goal is to have high speed access to the internet as this would allow free enterprise to grow small businesses into large.
- A bond could be offered with the town behind it; this would be a last resort.
- We do not want to deal with an exclusive provider.

JMoran said Fairpoint is going on the sale block soon according to a financial report he recently read. It was an analysis report at the end of the last quarter’s financial report published by Fairpoint. PRenaud said that TDS may be a better company to approach for internet service. They are upgrading their network to offer fiber to the premises. Our neighbors to the north have it and near neighbors to the south have it. PRenaud said he will do research on the business aspects of exclusion rights regarding incumbent local exchange carriers. He will also look more closely into the short term plans of Fairpoint. PRenaud will contact Fairpoint and TDS in light of recent developments and see where we stand. This could also have a bearing on the broadband event in September. AWood also suggested 186 Communications be contacted as well. Mrs. Wood said TDS Telecom owns US Cellular and they are a solid company.

With the local broadband picture in flux, it was decided to reconsider a Master Plan broadband vision statement at a later date.

Other business:

JMoran talked to VeryFine Co. and found it had been sold to Sunny Delight. He was unable to get ahold of B. Schumacher, Property Manager for Sunny Delight to discuss their property in town.

PRenaud had a discussion with KDay on a conservation site walk about the RSA 79-E package that he has ready. He plans to present it to the Select Board at their next meeting.

PRenaud will be sending out to the committee a handout from OEP on RSA162-K: development districts offering tax increment financing. He asks that everyone please read this carefully and offer your opinion. He offered a brief synopsis on RSA 162-K-5: it’s about earmarking tax revenues for certain development districts named by the Select Board. By having a thought out opinion of this, we can decide whether this is a viable program for the town to pursue.

JMoran said the SWOT analysis clearly indicated that we are not in a position to have an industrial park. We need to grow our economic development within the town and not in one location. Having broadband available to businesses is crucial as it has become a “utility, a necessity” for growth.

PRenaud and RMarshall will be working together on the open space ordinance this summer. He will keep the EDAC board apprised of how this ordinance will be changed. The EDAC committee had various ideas concerning the open space ordinance: senior housing, and affordable single homes are very

important. PRenaud said his focus for the open space ordinance is on locations outside of the town center which are more likely to have larger subdivisions. He will be looking at the feasibility of the Village Plan Alternative Subdivision as an Innovative Land Use Control. PRenaud stated that retaining young people in town is very important from an economic development view, as they are the primary wealth creators. Right now, there is not much affordable housing for young people. JMoran thinks that there is no leverage for the town in housing for young people. BWood stated that any new development regulations need to take into account the real cost that townspeople will bear. JMoran offered perhaps a magnet concept for the center of town that could be a draw to Greenfield. JMoran said broadband and solar gardens are the two items that would bring growth both to residential and commercial areas of town.

PRenaud reviewed selected results from an annual survey of American corporate executives regarding expansion or relocation plans conducted by Area Development Magazine. The survey was provided to the EDAC by JMoran.

- Only 2% planned relocation or expansion in New England, as compared to 20% in the Midwest, 17% in the South, and 14% in the Southwest
- Biggest barriers in selecting a site: 44% high corporate taxes, 29% excessive government regulations, and 26% lack of available skilled labor
- 72% of executives say tax incentives are the most important factor for location decisions
- 76% say available ready sites are important or very important in choosing a location
- 87% said the availability of water was not an important factor
- availability of advanced internet communications technology services deemed very important or important fell from 84.6% in 2013 to 45.1% in 2014 (#5 to #24 in site selection factors ranking); it was explained in the survey that the drop is principally due to the perception that these services are now so ubiquitous that they are taken for granted in almost every location.

EDAC's next meeting is June 15 at 7:00 p.m.

9:05 p.m. Adjournment

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

