

Economic Development Committee Minutes 03/17/2014

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Sharon Rossi

March 17, 2014

Members present: RCilley, PRenaud, NNickerson, AWood, JFletcher

PRenaud called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. PRenaud asked AWood to fill-in for JMoran. PRenaud asked if anyone had any corrections to last month's meeting minutes. No one did. NNickerson motioned to accept the minutes as written. RCilley seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor.

PRenaud said UNH Cooperative Extension was to be here tonight, but due to a scheduling conflict, they will be coming next month. PRenaud has contacted Jerry Hunter, IT Vice President at CMRC, and he wants to come and help the committee focus on broadband. PRenaud said JHunter is very interested in broadband and Paul will schedule agendas to accommodate JHunter as he lives beyond Concord, NH.

1: Committee Membership: EDAC has an oral agreement with the Select Board about our reappointments. Our charter states that any members continuing on the committee must be reappointed by the Select Board. PRenaud will be staying on this committee as well as on a broadband subcommittee. CMorrocco will not be continuing on this committee. PRenaud isn't sure of JHopkins staying on board, but he will be seeing him on March 24 and will find out. AWood would like to join as a permanent member. PRenaud would appreciate it if the present committee would stay in place. Elections for officers are to take place in March - tonight. PRenaud will talk to the Select Board next Thursday, so he would like to know who is going to stay on the committee. AWood, NNickerson, RCilley will commit to one more year. PRenaud is not sure if JFletcher will be willing to stay on. He will be arriving later as his work and spouse's schedules are in conflict. (JFletcher later agreed to stay on for the next year, but will probably be late for most of the meetings.)

2. Broadband: UNH Cooperative Extension will meet with us next month, on April 21 and it will likely be a long meeting. The UNH Cooperative Extension wants to have our spring meetings done by May as they want the summer off. We are going to have our second meeting with UNH next month and then will likely need two meetings with them in May.

APatt has been having conversations with Comcast to have them come in and do an evaluation on broadband and cable capabilities for the town. A feeler was put out by Francestown for a joint cable agreement. PRenaud asked MDonovan to supply us with materials about Cable Franchise Agreements for the next meeting.

PRenaud will contact other people to work on the subcommittee for broadband. He is looking for people who perhaps aren't tech savvy, but who see the need for improved broadband in the town.

AWood asked of RCilley and NNickerson if they both wanted to be involved in EDAC broadband issues? They said yes, but RCilley doesn't want every meeting to be on broadband. AWood said perhaps we could have every other meeting be on broadband. PRenaud is looking for organizational flexibility in juggling the broadband committee, whether it is a subcommittee or working committee, and the EDAC. The problem is we have some people who have minimal interest in broadband, while others may have little or no interest in non-broadband issues. PRenaud at this time needs the freedom to accommodate people with varying interests, yet still sustain participation in all committee activities.

It was suggested by UNH that PRenaud inform the Select Board of the details and goals of the broadband assistance program. PRenaud will do this prior to the next EDAC meeting.

PRenaud said any committee working for the town has to take minutes and they must be made available. He stated he will be responsible for the minutes should a separate committee be formed.

NNickerson said we need a definite structure on broadband. RCilley asked does the plan have to be done first. AWood and PRenaud said yes. UNH is expecting the subcommittee to have the personnel to put together the plan.

AWood said we need to get the scope of the goal of what we are trying to do. Such as more business to town is a goal and lacking a broadband is a block for economic growth in town.

RCilley commented companies, who contribute to the tax base, and CMRC, who is the largest employer in town, should be a priority because they would be heavy internet users.

3. Election of officers: PRenaud said he would prefer to not chair this committee for another year, but because of the broadband issue and the assistance program, he thinks he needs to continue as chair through the end of the program. He is willing to be the chair of a broadband subcommittee, but would prefer someone else eventually be the chair for EDAC.

RCilley thanked PRenaud for the super job he has done as chair of EDAC, but if it comes that PRenaud needs to step down, RCilley as vice chair is willing to step in as Chair of EDAC.

JFletcher moved to table the election of officers until next month. RCilley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor.

4: Review of town results:

Industrial zoning amendment passed at town meeting.

PRenaud would like to contact the Coville heirs about the industrial overlay zone off of Sawmill Road. He would like to craft a letter to send to the heirs and inform them of the zoning change and to find out whether the heirs are willing to sell the property.

PRenaud has been contacted by an in-town business owner inquiring about purchasing this piece of land. The potential for the location is tremendous.

RSA 79-E also passed. PRenaud said he would work with the Select Board in putting together an application packet. He will collect examples of what other towns have for the RSA 79-E applications. He said the packet would consist of an application form and a covenant form with possibly the text of the statute included. NNickerson said that the RSA 79-E language should accompany the application. PRenaud will e-mail examples to board members next week and ask that they look them over for discussion at next month's meeting. Once we've finalized the application, both the application and explanation of RSA 79-E should be made available on the town's website.

5: Objectives for 2014

Economic development plan – PRenaud said he thinks the town should go beyond a limited and general economic development plan; we should have a devoted chapter on Economic Development in the Master Plan. PRenaud volunteered to write this section and would like the EDAC's input.

JFletcher said he feels we shouldn't get specific in the Master Plan; just general goals should be mentioned as things change so rapidly. JFletcher said it gets too dangerous being specific in the Master Plan. PRenaud said we could possibly put proposals of other areas that can be re-zoned for industry in the chapter.

PRenaud said this Master Plan chapter would start with this committee. We can discuss the pros and cons of keeping it short and vague or getting somewhat more specific. Once the broadband plan is done, this should be included in an Economic Development chapter. The Planning Board would have to approve the final form of any Master Plan additions. I would like to develop an outline of what we want to address and expound a little on each.

PRenaud said in late April he will talk to the Select Board about other activities or goals that the EDAC can work on, i.e., tradeshow, inventory of town owned lands, fundraising for the Meetinghouse, etc. This will be after the committee discusses goals in more detail at our next meeting. Since we are an advisory committee, I would prefer to be in agreement with the Select Board before beginning any time consuming projects.

6. Other Business - None

7. Next Meeting – A SWRPC member will be coming to the meeting to observe the broadband assistance program portion of the meeting and will be available for any questions. The planning commission was involved in getting this program awarded to Greenfield and they will be using our experience with this as an example to possibly implement in other towns. The RSA 79-E packet will be discussed. Hopefully, PRenaud will have some new volunteers for the broadband subcommittee at the meeting. RMarshall may also briefly speak at the April meeting.

8:45 Adjournment

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