**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Approved Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Janice Pack

May 15, 2017

**Members Present:** Paul Renaud, Jack Moran, Norm Nickerson, Kathleen Carpenter

**Meeting Opened**: 7:00 PM

**The Minutes** of November 21, 2016 were reviewed. A motion to accept the Minutes as written was made by PRenaud, and seconded by JMoran. All were in favor except KCarpenter who abstained. The Minutes of January 16, 2017 were reviewed. PRenaud made a motion to accept the Minutes as written, and JMoran seconded. All were in favor except KCarpenter, who abstained.

**Update on Internet**: Consolidated Communications is in the process of acquiring FairPoint. PRenaud looked into their history, and feels that this may be good news for the town. In 2018 they are proposing that all customers currently getting 15 megabyte per second internet will be upgraded to 100. Anyone within a mile to a mile and a quarter should get this improved service. How reliable their service is remains to be seen. People at the edge of town may not be eligible at this stage, and PRenaud hasn’t heard anything about cable. He would like to invite them to a meeting in the fall.

**Master Plan: Economic Development Implementation Strategies**

The Planning Board will hold a public hearing for the Master Plan updates in June. PRenaud wanted to share the Economic Development chapter with the Committee, as they will be responsible for its implementation. He noticed that most of the “whens” (timetable for action) were for 2017 and 2018, and wondered if that was a good idea.

The first objective to promote the town. One strategy was to develop a marketing campaign; another was to update the town website, and the third was to expand the town tax base by encouraging home based businesses and recruiting new employers.

The Committee discussed the newly designed website, and EDAC’s presence on it. JMoran felt that it would be better to have a separate page, one that would be more user friendly and encourage participation. PRenaud will get in touch with VTS to see what their pricing would be to design such a page.

JMoran mentioned that since the new budgets for the year had already been approved, we should speak to Aaron Patt find out what our budget would be to do this work. We need to know what we have to spend before we can go forward. NNickerson said if we need to start small, a content based site might be all we can afford to begin with. JMoran said SEO (search engine optimization) is the next thing to think about: Keywords that people might use to bring them to our website.

The Committee agreed that many of the people in town don’t even know about EDAC, and getting our name out there and getting public input would help our cause. Having forms online, and links that people can click on to get advice and information, could be helpful.

JMoran said we need to take on one thing at a time. Taking on the website first makes sense. JMoran felt that the EDAC mission statement and some of the projects that we had intended to tackle were our long-range plans.

PRenaud said that EDAC also had a share in the implementation part of the Energy Chapter, and read the appropriate content to the rest of the Committee. The various alternative energies were discussed.

**Local Business Directory/Event**

The money budgeted originally was for this event; but the website may be a priority now. The original purpose was to facilitate a public forum where TDS and FairPoint could introduce their product enhancements and other businesses could participate. Due to the imminent FairPoint acquisition, the focus of the event needs to be changed. KCarpenter offered to chair a business networking event in the spring of 2018; we will discuss this later.

**Other Matters**

We are still looking for another member. PRenaud will look into putting something in the newsletter.

Reminder that the **next meeting will be held on June 19, 2017 at 7:00 PM**. If you are unable to attend, please let PRenaud know in advance.

Hearing no more business to discuss, JMoran moved to adjourn the meeting; NNickerson seconded and all were in favor.

**The meeting Adjourned at 9:10 PM.**