**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Approved Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Paul Renaud

October 19, 2017

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

**Attending:** Brenda Parker, Ray Cilley

**Meeting Opened**: 7:02 PM

**The Minutes** of September 18, 2017 were read. A motion to accept the Minutes as written was made by JMoran, and seconded by KCarpenter. All were in favor; motion passed.

**Business Event Coordinator/Planner:**

Brenda Parker described her background in the town and in business. After retiring from the corporate world five years ago, she began network marketing. She has organized various social gatherings and is marketing and managing a band.

The EDAC described what they are trying to do (reference minutes of 9/18/17). AWood stated we are looking to establish a set of needs for businesses in town. NNickerson feels the goal is to increase tax revenue by increased business growth. KCarpenter thinks we could get High School students doing community service to help us out in this. JMoran told BParker we are asking for a quote, and then negotiate on the details after receipt of a proposal.

BParker said she would send a quote to the EDAC in a few weeks. This will be discussed further during the November meeting.

**7:25 PM Rymes Property:**

Ray Cilley speaks about the Rymes property as a worthwhile pursuit for the community. Some think it’s too expensive, but we need to explore it. The question is: what will happen to that piece of property? RCilley said Rymes has expressed a willingness to donate a portion of the property. The town needs to look at all the options to make it happen.

PRenaud said the town has 3 or 4 options to move forward on this. He asked RCilley about the boundary line dispute. RCilley spoke to Peter Davenport (owner of Harvester Market, Rymes abutter) and he said the dispute has been resolved. RCilley feels that acquiring and improving the former filling station site would make the town center more attractive to people, and it is part of the vision of the charrette.

JMoran had several comments regarding the Rymes property: (1) the property is currently on the tax rolls. Purchasing it would remove revenue from the town. (2) The property would be used as an entrance way to the town septic area, but the question of what the town will do with this area has not been answered or seriously discussed. (3) There is already an access way to the septic/park area. (4) Improvements and ongoing maintenance costs for the entryway and any proposed park like use of the septic area must be factored into the equation.

PRenaud briefly outlined the options for acquiring the property. JMoran questioned the viability of the filling station area bringing any value to the town. He said it seems this would add a lot of work and we would need to get the money back somehow. He’s having a hard time seeing a favorable cost/benefit in this.

KCarpenter said a discretionary easement would make the house less saleable, and it’s in bad shape as it is.

JMoran and NNIckerson were concerned about the incremental tax loss to the town should an easement be granted. RCilley said he can find a buyer for the property within a short period of time, to which KCarpenter responded, “There are no guarantees. But whoever buys it would need to improve it, which would increase revenues over time.”

RCilley asked, “If Rymes commits to an agreement, can you subdivide it? Can the town get an exemption for creating a non-conforming lot if part of the lot is intended to be conveyed to the town?” PRenaud read parts of RSA 674:54, Governmental Use of Land.

AWood stated that whether it’s good for the town’s economic development, if the town owns the filling station area, it would need to be beautified, adding future costs. RCilley said funding could be obtained for an architect to help with that. JMoran said he’s not worried about getting grants for beautification, he just wants to know what we’re going to do with all this. KCarpenter is sure we could get students to help in a project like this, they have done similar projects in Peterborough. RCilley said right now, the proposal with Rymes will be with Rymes only, and we should pursue the best deal we can make.

KCarpenter said there is no place here to sit and relax, like the riverfront area in Peterborough, and that it could increase shopping in town. If we can utilize the septic area for something, and an improved entryway, it would allow this to become more of an attractive center of town. JMoran agreed it would be beneficial as an access, but we need to know what the plans for the septic area would be. NNickerson said it could work if we can get the Rymes property for low cost. AWood feels this idea could be leveraged by a more business friendly downtown that can grow.

RCilley wanted to bring this idea to the committee to brainstorm how it can get done. He believes it can revitalize the downtown area. If we can’t attract business and industry to the industrial area, we need something else to attract business to town. NNickerson responded that a more walkable downtown could make it more a more pleasurable place to be, and make Greenfield more attractive. He can see these benefits, but is not convinced of economic benefits. This would all be contingent on the town getting the lot, but would like to see an offer on the table.

PRenaud said we should get a legal opinion from the Municipal Association to clarify how RSA 674:54 applies in this case. He called for a vote on the matter. The committee voted 5 - 0 to get a legal opinion from the NHMA.

JMoran reiterated the need to know the details of why we are doing this, before the details of how we are doing this. The issue is we don’t know the future costs, and I want to understand what the vision is. PRenaud cautioned about drawing the line on this with the Planning Board members on the committee, because of the possibility of a subdivision proposal from Rymes in this case eventually coming before the Board.

**2018 Budget:**

It was decided to raise the clerical line by $50 to $650. The EDAC line remains at $1500 for now as a placeholder. This will be revisited at next month’s meeting after a proposal is received for business event coordinator services. The logistics for these events, contract details, and whether funds need to be encumbered from the 2017 budget will also be discussed at the November 20th meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.**