

TOWN OF ADAMS SELECT BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

Board of Selectmen Meeting

March 25, 2015

On the Above date the Board of Selectmen held a Workshop Meeting at Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. **Chairman Arthur Harrington** presided. Present were **Vice Chairman Richard Blanchard**, Members **John Duval**, **Joseph Nowak**, **Jeffrey Snoonian** and Town Administrator **Tony Mazzucco**.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Harrington.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Potential Budget for Meals and Lodging Tax

Town Administrator Mazzucco gave an overview of what would happen if the Town went with the Meals and Lodging Tax. Digital light projectors, signage, and banners can come out of this fund to make a substantial impact on the visual appeal of the downtown. The fund could go into general marketing materials, and developing websites as needed. \$15,000 would be put aside for the Economic Development Commission from a different pool of money. Adopting the program would project to bring in about \$80,000 for the year, and the Lodging Tax only produces \$4,000 in revenue currently. Once a fund is set up, any money not expended rolls over to the next year. Segregating it from the general fund will ensure it doesn't get cut.

If the Meals and Lodging Tax doesn't pass, it will be looked into again next year. If it goes through, there should be an addition of a Town Planner next year. The Meals and Lodging Taxes will not affect the business community, and is paid elsewhere but not in Adams. There was a public meeting for businesses to voice concern, and the biggest issue was businesses choosing not to add tax on beer, but charging tax only on meals at the table. Most of the revenue would come from fast food restaurants.

Banners could be put up for Thunderfest and Ramblefest, the Polish Mile and Summer Street, Hoosac Street and Center Street since they are the center of the scenic area for the train. Some of the funds could be used to add night signage with changeable downtown event signs projected on the wall of a building or other surface. It could enhance the look and feel of the Downtown area, once tested for public safety impact. The Town would need to be in charge of the signs and zoning would have to be created to handle it.

The Town could apply to have a Mt. Greylock license plate and recurring revenue from this could also go into the Economic Development fund and it would roll like a stabilization fund. This could be a Beacon to Beacon plate from the Beacon of Mount Greylock to Beacon Hill.

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PILOT Agreement for the Solar Project

The Solar Pilot agreement is a typical agreement, and the amount proposed is very fair. This payment would be carried over and put it into economic development fund as part of one budget and one fund, and this would fund economic development commission.

Personal tax would be paid on the equipment and plant. Personal property panels would depreciate. Approval would go through Town Meeting, and the state wants it as soon as possible. Adding this to economic development fund would be a separate step.

Discussion on Job Description for Marketing and Economic Development Coordinator

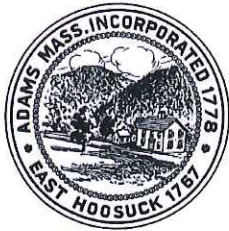
A properly trained person for economic development would be paid \$80,000 to \$100,000. Having this position would allow for cross training and take a few things like Downtown Development off of Donna Cesan's plate.

Staff members should not be coordinating events, and this person would help market current events and get events and meetings to come to Adams. With potential weddings at the Greylock Glen it may be advantageous to bring a bridal show to town. This position could do one-stop-permitting and guide people through the process for events. Saturday events bring in a couple thousand people and benefit the town. Community Development does a lot but is not properly staffed, and CDBG takes a lot of time and staff to manage. The emphasis is for Donna Cesan to focus more on economic development. The Town also could develop an image for the industrial park.

The Events Committee and ProAdams put on events. More can be done with businesses, the Town website, and to help Adams show up on the digital map. Adams wants to attract people from Boston, New York City and other areas and they need to be able to find it quickly or they will move on.

Adams needs to research updating downtown inventory, and get an analysis of the industrial park so there are identified sites for retailers who want to develop a business. There are not many hotels in town so it is hard to market to tourists. This person will help Donna Cesan, who will manage Greylock Glen. Donna can handle economic development and fill in the marketing portion to get people here.

This position would manage the tourism staff at the Visitor's Center, but previously the Tourism person was in the Visitor's Center and spent a lot of time covering the desk. Adams needs someone to work with downtown merchants and to find tenants in industrial park.



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Town Administrator Mazzucco discussed forming a Community Development Cabinet to help those who are ready to bring a business to Adams with locating resources. The Cabinet would consist of the Community Development Director and staff, the Building Commissioner, Planning, Zoning, and Conservation Commission to walk them through the process. The challenge is getting people to want to put in a business and increasing the number of those interested to have a certain success rate. Marketing is important for getting more projects on the table.

Community Development follows up with businesses but the plan is to have one person as a conduit to the Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and the Planning Board to provide support, see what they need and connect them with the Town assets. This will be a community wide position based under Community Development, and will focus on the downtown to use resources and reallocate how things are done. The Town Administrator and Donna Cesan would work with larger businesses and this position would concentrate on smaller businesses. Together it would be the Community and Economic Development Department, based in-house instead of at the Visitor's Center.

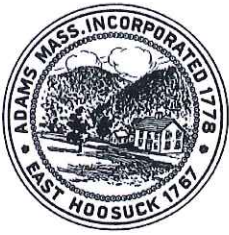
With the funding supply as defined, this position would always have funding. The big picture is to fill the position and get the Meals and Lodging tax. Then, a restructure of the building department would take place to be a one stop shop, and a revamp of zoning regulations. There will be substantial changes to town hall staffing to reshape what is currently being done. The priority is to focus on bringing in businesses with jobs, at least for the next 5 to 10 years.

Cohen Project

The State wants Jeff Cohen to take down part of the building. He has a couple more hurdles to jump over before progress can be made.

Formation of Economic Development Commission

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised he is looking for a good group of 15 people to form an Economic Development Commission. This group should be made up of engineers, insurance personnel, banks, realtors, and other business professionals who can look at the bigger picture. There will be subcommittees made of 3 or 4 people that do outreach to get small ideas going. If this group represents businesses in town, a poll can be done to determine what the biggest challenges are, and to work on what will get other businesses to come here. Small manufacturing or technical outfits will bring in people who will come to local restaurants and businesses.



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As communities share services and regionalize, Adams could become a substation to another community. This Commission is one of the only ways to stabilize the tax rate and grow, or the Town could choose to get smaller and depend on other communities.

A 15 member commission is large. The Board was encouraged research other communities that have an economic development commission. There are 3 excellent educational facilities in the area and some specialize on workforce development. Hopefully a member of a higher education facility will be involved in this commission. The Economic Development Commission will be a group of people of volunteers to make projects happen, and projects will not be brought to them. This is not designed to be a deliberative board, but instead it is more of a working board. Once applications are received the Commission may be changed to be smaller.

Town Administrator Mazzucco hopes to get this Commission started by Town Meeting. The Marketing and Economic Development Coordinator Position will not get started until after that, since the Meals and Lodging Taxes need to get through first to get the funding in place before filling the position. A draft of by-laws will be created to get this moving.

The Commission should not be restricted to Adams residents, as out of town people may have a skillset or interest in making this happen for the area.

Announcements:

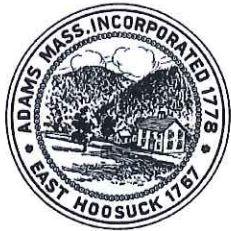
To Rescind a Vote

If one Member wants to rescind a vote, the Board would have to rescind the whole Board's vote on the budget, and if approved, a new vote would be taken. This would have to take place at a regular meeting, on the April 1, 2015 agenda. Chairman Harrington, the Finance Committee Chair and Town Administrator have since met with the School Chair and the number needed is now bigger than before. There will be a community discussion regarding whether an override would be needed to provide the funding. If the Select Board votes against the proposed amount, it will present a suggested amount for approval. The Finance Committee then approves or makes a different recommendation on the Select Board proposal. It then goes to Town Meeting for final vote.

Agenda Items

Maintenance of Solar Panels

Discussion is requested on maintenance and snow on solar panels. Jeff Grandchamp will be asked to have answers for the April 8, 2015 Workshop.



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Intermunicipal Agreement

The Adams Fire District Intermunicipal Agreement proposal still has some unfinished questions and issues. The Adams Fire District, Town Counsel, and Jeff Grandchamp will be asked to attend the Workshop on April 8, 2015 to clarify and answer questions.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission wants to have a smaller 5-member rather than 7-member board, and as there is a silent number in the charter it is up to the Select Board to make the decision.

Passing of Richard Biros

Member Nowak announced the sad news of the sudden passing of Richard Biros, and hoped that he would rest peacefully.

Public Meeting Video Recording

Member Nowak thanked Jeff Lefebvre for all the camera work done to provide the Select Board Meetings to the public, and helping to make Adams a transparent community.

Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn

Second by Vice Chairman Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary.



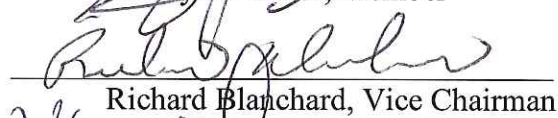
Joseph Nowak, Member



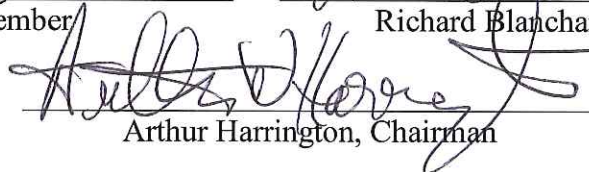
John Duval, Member



Jeffrey Snoonian, Member



Richard Blanchard, Vice Chairman



Arthur Harrington, Chairman