

**ASHBURNHAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

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**30 January 2017 - 6:30pm  
Public Safety Building Training Room**

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PRESENT: Bill Johnson, Chair, Chris McNabb, Leo Janssens II, John Enright, Ronald Putnam, Rosemarie Eldridge Meissner, Vice Chair, Jaclyn Wooding, Secretary, Christina Sargent, Joseph Gallagher, Deb Gardner

- 1) OPENING REMARKS - Bill Johnson opened the meeting.
- 2) INTRODUCTION OF NEWEST MEMBERS - Members Joe Gallagher, representing the Ashburnham Planning Board, and Deb Gardner, representing Cushing Academy, introduced themselves.
- 3) CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF MEMBER PRIORITIES - Johnson passed the floor to Meissner. Meissner leads "Visioning Exercise" by asking a number of questions, including why members chose Ashburnham, why they stay, what would make them leave and where would they go, what makes them proud of Ashburnham, what do they not like to admit, what is the personality of the town, and where they see Ashburnham in twenty years. Referring to the mission statement, Meissner mentioned that economic development groups help towns compete for economic resources and the AEDC should build a road map for economic growth.  
Floor is opened for member ideas. Enright would like to see us define permitting fast track. Sargent hopes to see Ashburnham become more business friendly. McNabb shares a list of small business websites with marketing ideas. Meissner wants to see the drive through town give a wow factor, to show pride and progress. Putnam asks if there are any legal documents for the commission to consider to allow us the AEDC to proceed. Johnson mentions updating the town's Master Plan will be key to getting funding for ideas.  
Wooding shares list of ideas for self-funding the AEDC, including a sign plaza at the entrance to town, small road directional signs for local, but out of the way businesses, and Main Street banners. Johnson mentions the commission may not be able to collect money.  
Janssens wants to see the priorities be Zoning changes, Downtown parking and to find out once and for all if the current DPW site is clean or not.  
Johnson lists his top priority to be relocating the DPW. He mentions that the development engineering company has all the reports and documents they need. He is hopeful that because the town has done two Phase I 21E Environmental reports, that we can skip to a Phase II. Mentions a grant from the Montachusett Regional Planning

Commission (MRPC). Johnson's next priorities are upgrading Winchester Park by moving the playground, and fixing the lighting, completing the Rail Trail, revitalizing the downtown area and promoting local business.

Putnam would like to see a more convenient gas station. Putnam also mentions we should look at South Ashburnham rail area for industrial sites, and the possibility of opening public swim access at Whitney Pond.

- 4) OLD BUSINESS - No old business.
- 5) PUBLIC COMMENT - Richard Wright, of Ashburnham Hardware, comments that the downtown parking situation needs serious attention. Wright mentions many instances of patrons of the downtown restaurants speeding through his parking lot and parking in no parking zones.
- 6) APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Wooding hands out copies of the minutes for members to take home. Johnson asks for minutes to be emailed to members prior to meetings, in order to streamline the approval process.
- 7) FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE - Next meeting is planned for Monday, February 13, 6:30pm. Public Safety Building Training Room.
- 8) ADJOURNMENT - Johnson calls meeting to a close. Meeting adjourned 9:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jaclyn Wooding, Secretary