

Derry Downtown Committee Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2011
7:00PM
Room 207, Derry Municipal Center

Roll Call- The meeting came to order at 7:02 pm. In attendance were Gordon Graham, Dave Nelson, George Sioras, Bob Cavanna, John T. O'Connor, Susan Kopetz, Kaitlyn Woods, Jack Roche, Tom & Mary Hankins, Jona Bostwick, John Anderson, Lauren Neves & Stuart Arnett.

Approval of the minutes- A motion was made by Dave Nelson to approve the minutes from November 18, 2010. The motion was seconded by Bob Cavanna and was passed unanimously.

Old Business-

A. Downtown Business Association- Tom Hankins summarized the discussion that took place At the Derry Downtown Business Association meeting that took place November 30, 2010 Security issues were addressed by Chief Garone. Security packets were passed around. Suggestions were made as to how businesses could protect themselves.

- 1. Holiday Parade** – Discussion regarding a change in time and or date for the 2011 Holiday Parade.
- 2. Maintenance-** Snow removal was discussed and in the recent storms snow removal has been great. Streetlights being out – Alan Cote suggested he be contacted by email and let him know the street light pole number when a light is out.
- 3. Signage-** better signage was discussed. At this meeting we saw the proposed signage and all agreed all it needed was to add a large “P” to the sign.
- 4. Advertising** – Promoting downtown total of 41 merchants and 18 advertised in the Nutfield News together. Next meeting 3rd week in February.

B. Claremont trip – Jona Bostwick will plan a group visit to Claremont for Friday March 18, 2011.

C. New England Institute for Medical Technology – Jack Roche indicated that he was able to get the remainder of the money needed. ~~He stated that he was looking at looking in an opening date by February.~~ He indicated that he was looking at a few downtown properties as a possible school location. He stated that he has been receiving donations and offers of furniture, desks, chairs and operating room equipment.

D. Moving Derry Forward Report – Stuart Arnett reported on the Moving Derry Forward process (copies distributed), and its impact on the DDC and downtown:

1. Good DDC participation, as evidenced by the many Downtown priorities that were listed and included. DDC Chair Gordon Graham and Planning Director George Sioras were active participants.
2. Significant downtown items include the resolution of parking questions, and what to do with the town-owned properties along Abbot Court (2.4 acres).

3. Stuart Arnett suggested that DDC return its recommendations for parking lots (new, fix-up or both) to the Council, as the Council was awaiting input from its DDC before taking up parking again.

- a. DDC agreed to continue its research so as to provide the Council with a compelling report

4. He also suggested that the DDC take a look at the Abbott Court options – four were presented to the DDC last summer – and begin the dialogue with the public, business and property owners and the Town Council as to the recommended strategy going forward. Again, the Town Council will want to hear from the DDC before taking on this opportunity.

- a. The Chair suggested that the next DDC Feb. meeting be entirely set-aside for discussion on the four Abbot Street property options

5. Stuart noted that regarding the recommendations of DDC, that sooner is better, as next year's budget will soon be formulated.

6. He reported that the MDF recommendations include two funding recommendations:

- a. A 1% of operating budget set-aside annually for all economic development activities, including both operations and capital costs. Based upon current operating budget, 1% is about \$340,000. And
- b. A Downtown Fund as part of this 1% (not in addition to), some set-portion to be decided by DDC/Council, so that DDC would be able to plan capital and other long-term projects with some assurance of what the investment amount would be; to avoid the “start-stop-starts” of downtown development initiatives.
- c. A Tax Increment Financing District for the downtown “Railroad Crossing Redevelopment Area” is also recommended in the MDF report, that it should be outlined and adopted this (upcoming) year, for future years capital spending. What the District should encompass, what public investments are needed, and to what eventual end are all questions that need to be resolved during the public-DDC-Council discussions.

F. Depot Steakhouse Restaurant Auction -delayed till April 11, 2011

G. Broadway Pets – George Sioras – Nothing new to update

H. Blight Ordinance – John T. O'Connor reported on what can be done by the town pertaining to Blight. We already have the tool, we just need to enforce it.

Referencing the **International Property Maintenance Code** which reads

Exterior structures shall be maintained in good condition. Peeling, flaking and chipping paint shall be eliminated and surface repainted section 304 of the International Property maintenance Code adopted under chapter 30 of Derry's building code.

Enforcing the International Property maintenance code is helpful, but there are limits to what the town can do once an owner has been notified and made the repairs. One idea is to motivate with tax breaks landlords who renovated & spruce up their properties and fill vacant storefronts.

**The Next meeting of the Derry Downtown Committee will be held at 7pm on Thursday
Feb 17, 2011 in room 207 of the Derry Municipal Building.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm