

Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, May 17, 2017

Present: Chairman, Kevin McLaughlin; Todd MacGregor (arrived at 7:10pm), Mark Rees, Bob Espindola (Committee of Selectman Representative) and William Roth.

Absent: Vice Chair-Wayne Hayward, and John Seed
Meeting opened at 6:34 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes: March 9, 2017 – Mark Rees made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by William Roth. The motion passed unanimously, and Bob Espindola abstained as he was not a member at the time of these minutes.

Update on Master Plan Process – Draft Economic Development Chapter: Bill Roth explained the draft economic development chapter, the background information and existing conditions (context of where we are). He said that this would set the stage for the Economic Development Plan. The Committee went over their comments to the draft. Bob Espindola questioned some of the numbers, percentages that were on the document. Mr. Roth said he would look into it further to find out where the numbers were pulled from and their meanings. Mr. Roth stated Fairhaven's population is approximately 16,000 people.

Kevin McLaughlin referred to page 9 of the document asking about the tax rate.

Mr. Roth discussed the tax rate differences and mentioned that not everything is equal with what is included is a tax rate. For example - Dartmouth and Wareham have different districts, fire and water; as well as paid trash, which are not figured in their tax rates and why they might be lower.

Mark Rees asked for the chart to be broken down a little bit more to take those examples into consideration. Mr. Roth will look into it, discuss it with the consultant and report back.

Vacant properties inventory update: Mr. McLaughlin has this on his "to do list". He will gather his data and report on it at the next meeting. He stated that he was surprised as he is collecting the data of vacancies that there weren't more vacancies as he thought there was.

Bill Roth said that Tractor Supply was putting in an application to take up 1/3 of Kmart.

There was a discussion about speaking to business owners who had a vacancy in their lot/store that perhaps they would like to advertise it on the EDC website, as it might help.

RFP for Economic Development Grant Study: Mark Rees advised the Committee that they had received a \$20,000 grant to help the Town develop an Economic Development Plan. Mr. Rees has put together a draft RFP with a "scope of work" that the Committee might be interested in hiring the consultant. Mr. Rees advised the Committee if they had any comments or additions to the draft, they could email him directly, but he would like to get it finalized by their next meeting.

Bob Espindola asked if the Committee wanted to grant the Chairperson the authority to speak to Mr. Rees to finalize the decision on the RFP, this way it could move the process along a little quicker. The Committee decided that was fine.

Bob Espindola made a motion that the Committee agrees that the 'scope of work' on the RFP is consistent with what they are looking for and was seconded by Todd MacGregor. The motion passed unanimously.

Bob Espindola made a motion that the Committee agrees to allow the Chairman, Kevin McLaughlin to finalize with staff the document for the RFP without redirecting it back to the Committee. The motion was seconded by Mark Rees. It passed unanimously.

Committee make-up and possible at large members: A discussion took place regarding the possibility of opening up the committee to other 'at large members'. Bill Roth explained that currently the Committee has two Town staff, Mark Rees & himself; three business owners, one planning Committee member, and one Selectmen representative. Mr. Rees explained that the Committee falls under the realm of the Board of Selectmen, so the committee could make a recommendation to the Selectmen if they wanted to make any changes.

Kevin McLaughlin felt that there should be more business owners invited to be on the committee, but not sure of the number of members.

Todd MacGregor felt that a less number of members would be able to get more done, than a larger amount of members.

Bob Espindola gave the idea that a less than quorum group of people from the committee could meet with different business owners in town as to share ideas, or be a 'sounding Committee', perhaps to gain some feedback. He has spoken to an individual who doesn't necessarily want to be on the public committee, but would be happy meeting with a couple of people to bounce ideas back and forth.

There was also discussion that the Fairhaven Business Association would be an avenue to meet and discuss.

There was a brief discussion about re-organizing the Committee (Chairman, Vice Chairman) at the next meeting.

Mark Rees recommend that he and Bill Roth be taken off the Committee as a voting member, but still attend meetings as 'Staff/Ex. Oficio' to help support and advice the Committee. This way the Committee could at least make a recommendation to the Selectboard to initiate two more at-large members from the community to be on the Committee.

Mark Rees made a motion that the Economic Development Committee will recommend to the Board of Selectman that two seats are available for at-large Committee members, with the positions of Mark Rees and Bill Roth simply going to a 'Staff/Ex. Oficio' members vs. voting members; and ask that the Board of Selectman make an appointment to 2-at large members. The motion was seconded by Bill Roth and passed unanimously.

Funds Remaining from FY-17 budget: Bill Roth reported there was \$4,000 plus left in FY17 funds, as currently the EDC has only been paying the Secretary for the minutes. Bill Roth recommended getting the RFP posted by end of the Fiscal year, just to use up some of the budgeted funds for advertising.

Discussion of funds was had. Bob Espindola asked if some of the funds could be used for Bobby Bruso, who is currently the Channel 18 Cable Director because his background is in marketing. Mr. Espindola thought they could do a video of sorts for the EDC. Mark Rees was unsure that a video could be done within a month. Mr. Espindola gave it as a food for thought inquiry.

As a point of interest, Mr. Espindola stated that there could be workshops offered to small businesses in the upcoming future to produce videos, etc. or just learning to produce their own videos as they are trying to engage the business community.

9. Chairman, Kevin McLaughlin took the agenda out of order to review the **Wind Farms Overview:** Mr. McLaughlin gave a presentation on a seminar he attended on Wind Farms. He said there were approximately 20-25 business people, politicians, UMASS fisheries, BCC and others who met to discuss wind farms for New Bedford. He explained what he learned at this seminar and would be happy to share the paperwork he received with any of the members. He stated that he felt that Fairhaven might be able to get on Committee with this in the future with their vacancies for offices or warehouses. He encouraged others to learn more about it as well, because it is coming. He stated there was another conference

coming up May 31st in Newton and he will forward the information to the members if they would like to attend.

10. **Goals for Next Year:** Mark Rees suggested this be tabled for this meeting. All agreed.

Mark Rees and Bill Roth will set up dates/schedule for the RFP Process and let the members know.

Bill Roth made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mark Rees. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting ended at 8:15pm.

List of Documents:

1. Economic Development – Town of Fairhaven Master Plan, Draft
2. DLS – Letter congratulating town on Community Compact Grant Received
3. “Scope of Work” Document for RFP
4. Memorandum – from Mark Rees – re: Economic Development Committee Members

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary