

Economic Development Committee
Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Present: Kevin McLaughlin; Todd MacGregor, Bob Espindola, Wayne Hayward, John Seed, Bernie Roderick, and Eddie Lopez

Ex-Officio Members Present: William Roth and Mark Rees

Meeting opened at 6:38 p.m.

Committee Elections (Chairman & Vice Chairman): Mark Rees took over the meeting as Chairperson so that the Committee could elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman. Mr. Rees opened the floor for a Chairman.

Todd MacGregor nominated Kevin McLaughlin as Chairman and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. There were no other nominations for Chairman. The Board voted Mr. McLaughlin in unanimously.

John Seed nominated Wayne Hayward for Vice Chairman and was seconded by Todd MacGregor. There were no other nominations for Vice Chairman. The Board voted Mr. Hayward in unanimously.

Mr. McLaughlin presided over the meeting as Chairman.

Acceptance of Minutes: May 17, 2017 – John Seed made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Bob Espindola. On the question, Mr. Roderick after reading the minutes and being a newcomer to the Committee asked if the properties discussed at the last meeting were about vacant businesses only. Mr. McLaughlin said it was. The motion passed 5-0-2, with Bernie Roderick and Wayne Hayward abstaining.

Interviews – Economic Development Study

1. FXM Associates
2. Camoin Associates

The Committee heard from two companies who put together a presentation about their services if chosen to do an Economic Development Study Plan. First was Frank Mahady, Principal in charge of FXM Associates, from Mattapoissett. He gave an overview of the different projects that have worked in/and around the area.

Mr. Mahady recommended the Committee review the Town of Marlborough's website for a good Economic Development Study Plan. Mr. Mahady stated they will look into retail opportunity, gap analysis, real estate market. He said they would also assist the EDC in drafting an Economic Development objectives and specific steps to meet those objectives.

Mr. MacGregor asked specifically what the term "incubator" was related to in one of the four goals that he discussed.

Mr. Mahady explained an "incubator" is setting up retail space in different buildings so that business like minded individuals could work there and share space with basically a cheaper rent.

Mr. MacGregor stated that he is sort of in that type of space now with renting from a local renter in Town and he likes this idea, just doesn't have the time to manage such a place. He would be in favor of office type "incubator's" and how to get them started and manageable.

Mr. Mahady touched on cluster zoning and having worked on the Planning Board's Master Plan in 1996, there were assumptions that people think that all rental housing means low income and that's not necessarily the case. He said it would be nice to attract the young professionals in rental housing.

Wayne Hayward asked if chosen, if FXM would be in a position to have a completed addendum for the Master Plan by January/February of 2018.

Mr. Mahady said he would be able to meet that deadline.

Mark Rees explained the process that the Committee is doing the interviews with the two RFP's and then would make a recommendation to him, and he would then do the hiring of the firm.

The second organization was Camoin Associates, based out of New York and they work nationally.

Christa Franzi and Tom Dworetzky were present to speak. Both expressed that Camoin has cutting edge data analyst and have done past projects in Groton, CT, and the Village of Hoosick, NY.

Mr. Hayward asked if they could meet the Master Plan deadline to be included.

Ms. Franzi said it was doable.

Bob Espindola asked specifically, if they weren't from the area, and the previous group was, how Camoin would overcome that hurdle.

Ms. Franzi said they would learn more about the community through public meetings and the outreach interviews. She said that mixed use development is happening nationally and she was sure no different here in Fairhaven.

As the meeting was being televised and recorded live on Facebook, Wayne Hayward asked a question for someone watching it on that venue. The question pertained to the Historic Preservation Plan.

Ms. Franzi said it would be preserving the history story for Fairhaven and having those historian conversations.

Mr. Roth asked how the scope meets the budget, whereas there is limited staff.

Ms. Franzi said it depended on what the Committee deemed a priority; internal prioritization or public input. They would be willing to work either way.

There was discussion among the Committee members after the two presentations. Kevin McLaughlin stated that obviously both organizations are qualified and he has had personal experience with FXM and thinks Mr. Mahady does have a leg up with knowledge of the area, but he also believes it is nice to have a set of fresh eyes looking at the project.

Mr. MacGregor stated he was leaning toward Camion for that purpose, fresh eyes, and a new approach.

Bernie Roderick stated based on the resumes he thought FXM was very detailed. He felt their proposal identified concerns and the goals were clearer, very thorough. Mr. Roderick also stated that he felt Camion was a little too “general”. He would feel more comfortable with FXM.

Wayne Hayward stated that the instinct was to look at going with a fresh pair of eyes, however the personal attention may lack, for how do you work with someone who has over an hour and a half commute to get here. You may have to Skype or conference call to express your thoughts. He too has worked with Frank Mahady in the past and has always felt he will be right there for the Committee for a better working relationship.

John Seed agrees that FXM is the better choice. He said that he feels that personal attention is important. He said it was more comforting to him that someone knows us, our needs and area would be more efficient.

Mr. Hayward said it has been his experience with the Master Plan process in engaging the public and to rely on someone who doesn't know Fairhaven and hear them say they will engage the public he feels is an uphill battle.

Eddie Lopez agreed that both identified emerging trends, mixed use and other. He believes with FXM being right next door they would have a stake in Fairhaven doing well. He didn't think that Camion did much research in Fairhaven or made their presentation personalized to Fairhaven.

Bob Espindola stated that he believed it was clear that FXM had the most experience and brought more to the table. He would choose FXM.

More discussion ensued.

Wayne Hayward made a motion to recommend FXM as the Consultant for the Economic Development Plan and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed 5-2, with Todd MacGregor and Kevin McLaughlin in opposition.

Mark Rees asked if the Committee was okay with moving forward and having the Chairman present to work on the contract with him for FXM. The Committee agreed.

Current Development Review Update – Bill Roth

Mr. Roth gave an overview of current developments happening in Town. He stated a redevelopment at the old Kmart site is taking place with a Tractor Supply, Big Lots, and an unidentified store as of right now. He said that they will be doing a lot to get rid of the common cut through and it's going to be landscaped professionally and look a lot different than it does now.

Mr. Roth stated that Ocean State Job Lot has their grand opening scheduled for August 19, 2017.

The Planning Board is currently reviewing a Special Permit for a gas station/convenience store at the SE corner of Bridge Street and Route 240.

There are conversations that the Citizens Bank in the Washington Street Plaza may be moving to a smaller service at the building formerly known as Pizza Hut.

A potential Glass Blowing business will be moving into the old "House of Drums" on Main Street.

And the Route 6 Business Bays are permitted and being built across from Stop & Shop.

Eddie Lopez shared concerns and briefly spoke about how EDC could potentially get involved with the real estate market in Fairhaven.

Mr. Roth encouraged all members to read through some of the Towns that currently have an EDC committee to gather ideas and direction. Framingham, Scituate and Marlborough have good websites.

Bob Espindola offered perhaps a field trip to these Towns to see what their doing. It is a task he will look into. A brief discussion was had on 'quorum' /open meeting law.

Mr. Roth asked everyone to identify that their contact information is correct.

Bernie Roderick asked some questions about what EDC can investigate regarding Atlas Tack as well as Park Motors.

Bob Espindola stated that there are meetings in the process with EPA and MA Development Group re: Atlas Tack. Mr. Roth explained that there is a consent decree with EPA that the Town will forego any back taxes with Atlas Tack for the area to be cleaned up by EPA.

Mr. Roth advised that Park Motors is privately owned and EDC would have no jurisdiction.

Mr. Roderick also asked about establishing a calendar for meetings.

Mr. Roth suggested that the Committee designate the Chairman to set up meeting dates with him and Mr. Rees.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested the next meeting at the end of September when FXM gets hired to have an initial start up meeting.

Wayne Hayward made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by John Seed. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectively,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary