

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, May 14, 2013
356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

Board Members Present: Paul Parker, Charles Doke, David Kestner, Joshua Carlsen, Martin Laferte

Selectmen's Representative: Charlie King

Board Members Absent/Excused: Cindy Snowdon, Glen Demers

Town Staff Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Kathy Menici,
Department Secretary Bette Anne Gallagher

Public Present: Neil Johnson

At 6:05 pm Chairman Parker called the meeting to order. Chairman Parker seated Martin Laferte in place of Cindy Snowdon.

Mettee Planning Consultants

Chairman Parker said this was a special meeting to conduct interviews with the two prospective consultants regarding their Statements of Qualifications for the Community Planning Grant.

Jack Mettee introduced himself and Roger Hawk stating that they would be working on the TIF and 79-E portions of the project. Michele Craig said she would be working on public participation/community involvement. The Board members and staff were introduced to the consultants.

Mr. Mettee thanked the Board for their invitation and congratulated them for being awarded Round 2 funding. He said he would be presenting his statement and the Board's questions in a power point presentation and then they would be happy to further discuss and answer questions.

Mr. Mettee said the process would involve residents, Planning Board, staff and the consulting team and has three elements: TIF for downtown and Route 11, 79-E and public outreach. He pointed out the difference between outreach and engagement.

Roger Hawk spoke about the success of the TIF area created in Bedford about 2 ½ years ago.

The process:

- The Town adopts the provisions of RSA 162K
- Adopt the project area
- Warrant language (establish and when the time is right float bond, but authorize in advance)
- Town meeting vote to authorize
- Solicit bids and award contract
- Issue bond

Mr. Hawk showed the spreadsheet that the team produces and which becomes the central piece. It is the culmination of all the work and involves many updates working with the Board of Selectmen and staff.

Mr. Mettee reviewed the 79-E process:

- Define the district
- Establish the time period during which the assessment will be frozen – up to 5 years beginning at the completion of the construction
- Must be a public benefit
- Establish covenant that lays out the responsibilities
- Develop criteria for what is a public benefit – match Town and owner needs

Public education is vital. These are sophisticated financial instruments and the public can be skeptical. Some of the tools to achieve this are:

- Meetings with key groups and owners
- Community forums
- Website postings
- Newspaper articles
- Public access TV

Mr. Mettee said the success of these efforts is measured by how many residents are reached and influenced. He also said it is important to report to the residents each year what has been accomplished.

Michele Craig said she agrees that outreach is critical and recommends forming an advisory committee that reaches out to others. Some groups to include would be committees that meet on a regular basis such as the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Economic Development/Downtown Committee; seniors; school groups and the spiritual community.

The goal is not just to speak to the community but to engage them in the process. Abutters to downtown as well as individual businesses must be included.

Roger Hawk emphasized that it is important to understand where the funding for the infrastructure comes from – that it is captured from new development to pay off the debt. The revenue stream must be lined up before the bond is issued otherwise the Town will have to subsidize.

Mr. Mettee said that there is always talk about some small town that established a TIF district and it was a failure. He said these are rumors and no TIF in New Hampshire has been a failure.

The consulting team answered questions from the Board about percentages of participation in various towns around the State and types of projects. They emphasized that each town is different and that for success both owners and the community must be involved. The first step is to enable the Town to act and then proceed with a stepped plan.

The question was asked about State involvement on Route 11. Mr. Mettee said that the State would be very involved and must be part of the process.

Chairman Parker asked if they would need to hire anyone else and Mr. Mettee said it would be himself, Roger Hawk, Michele Craig and Neatline Associates working with Planner Menici.

The Board took a short recess.

Jeffrey H. Taylor & Associates, Inc.

The Board members and staff were introduced to Jeff Taylor.

Mr. Taylor said he and Steve Whitman had been working together in the business of land use planning for 10 years. During that time he said they worked with 65 municipalities including 2 that were out of state on:

- Master Plan
- Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations
- Design Charettes
- Downtown zoning

In response to a question Mr. Taylor said he had never drafted language for a 79-E warrant but it was fairly straightforward. He said 79-E is a good tool but not a game changer and community response to it has been mixed. In a strong market such as Concord it was adopted and was a good success.

If selected by Farmington, he would frame each district with a statement of purpose so the Board of Selectmen would have a standard for evaluation.

Mr. Taylor said he has worked on TIF districts in Londonderry and Raymond and neither went forward. He is currently working with Dover on a mixed use development on the north side of the river across from the train station that has a binding contract in place.

He explained that his experience is on the planning side not the financial side and in the past has partnered with Jack Dugan from Keene. If Mr. Dugan were brought in it would be an additional expense.

Mr. Taylor said that the scope of the proposal cannot be accomplished for \$30,000. If he were to work on re-zoning downtown and the 79-E component that would be about \$30,000 but if the TIF were added it would cost an additional \$30,000. He said that at \$30,000 there was no provision for financial work. He said the scope of the project must be adjusted or the Town would need to find more money.

Mr. Taylor cautioned that if improvements were started prior to a developer's firm commitment the Town could be spending money on work that might have to be redone to suit a developer's needs.

He recommended that the Town stay away from implementation of TIF and pursue new downtown zoning and 79-E.

Charlie King asked if he was aware of other communities that had proceeded with a TIF using the money recaptured through the increased taxes but without using a bond. Mr. Taylor said Peterborough had chosen a 2 mile stretch to improve sidewalks, curbing and recreation areas. They set a base line at current levels and as that increased the money was put aside allowing them every 2 or 3 years to improve a couple hundred feet of sidewalk or about 100 feet per year averaged out. This was sort of a "training wheels" TIF and eventually the community could see that if bonded the work could accelerate and the benefits be reaped.

For outreach he would start with the downtown owners, engage them and have them speak in favor of the project. He felt the education process must be brought to the community and not just invite them to attend meetings. He said this would require a lot of effort.

Mr. Taylor said that if selected both he and Steve Whitman would attend meetings; Mr. Whitman would handle the re-zoning aspect and he would handle 79-E and TIF.

Once both consultants had left, the Board discussed the information presented and the two very different approaches.

Jack Mettee had emphasized putting everything in place but not implementing until a developer was line up. Jeff Taylor seemed to be heading toward redevelopment zoning in the downtown area but this was not part of the RFQ or part of the submission and the Board was not entirely clear what he was recommending.

Planner Menici said he was recommending a change in the program and she was disappointed he didn't address the proposal. The Chairman said Mr. Taylor was proposing something he was more qualified to do.

The Planner was asked if the scope could be changed. She said she was not sure because it was laid out in the grant agreement that had already been signed so she would have to go back to New Hampshire Housing to find out if changes could be made. The grant application might have to be rescored and might require another RFQ. She added that the proposal tonight was very different from last fall's discussion with Steve Whitman. The Planner said the outcome of this project should be regulatory and ready to be taken to Town Meeting. If the residents do not pass the warrant that would not be an issue.

After discussing both consultants and the goals the Board had in mind including starting slowly and then later instituting a bond it was decided to make their decision at the May 21st meeting rather than voting tonight.

The Board felt that the Mettee team had more experience and was ready to go. On the other hand they were concerned with Jeff Taylor's change of scope.

At 8:00 pm Martin Laferte motioned to adjourn the meeting; 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Bette Anne Gallagher, Department Secretary

Chairman, Paul Parker