

MINUTES

HOOKSETT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HOOKSETT TOWN HALL HOOKSETT, NEW HAMPSHIRE Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Call To Order: Chairman W. Sirak called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

Present: Chairman William Sirak, Craig Ahlquist, Tom Barrett, Alden Beauchemin, Fred Bishop, Steve Korzynowski, Paul Loiselle, Allison Smith, Carol Granfield (Town Administrator), Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner), David Preece (SNHPC), Jack Munn (SNHPC), Amy Kizak (SNHPC).

December 3, 2008 Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion

Committee Membership, Additional Members

Chairman Sirak explained the necessity of moving the meeting to the Town Hall. He also reminded the board that membership on the committee is voluntary and if anyone feels he/she does not have the time to continue on the committee to let the committee know. Members are appointed by the Town Council.

C. Granfield advised the board of the policies and procedures on conducting a public and non-public meeting.

Website Update

J. Duffy updated the committee on the website. An overview of what the web pages would look like were presented to the committee. Tracey Edwards Company is still working on the site as well as the Town's main website. They are anticipating the website will be ready in March. A question was raised as to whether software could be added to the site in order to monitor who has accessed the site.

D. Preece added that the Metro Economic Development Website will have a direct link to the Hooksett website as well as other communities in the region.

Amy explained that the site would have an atlas of the area which will show all the Town businesses and the different types of businesses. It will also show the parcels available to be developed. Additional information will be added to the GIS program to show details on properties. J. Duffy stated there is money left over (approximately \$21,000) from a previous warranty article that could be used for the project. P. Loiselle suggested bringing the matter before the Council for approval.

J. Duffy moved to approve the improvements to the GIS program using funds from the warrant article and present the matter to the Council for approval. Motion seconded by A. Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Ambassadors Program Update

F. Bishop gave an update on the Ambassadors Program. Town Department Heads were contacted and asked whether they would like to participate in the program where a member of the EDC and a department head would visit existing business locations. Department Heads would be teamed up with a member and assigned a list of businesses they would visit. F. Bishop provided a list showing the team members and businesses to be visited.

P. Loiselle moved to endorse the program and begin the process. Motion seconded by C. Ahlquist. Motion carried unanimously.

This will be presented to the Council for approval.

“Old Town Hall” Study Committee Update

A. Smith presented an update. The Town has a deed to the property from the early 1800's where a family deeded the Town Hall to Hooksett. There is a restriction that requires the Town Hall to be used for Town purposes for the life of the ownership or it reverts back to the original owners. Sue Manchester from Sheehan, Phinney Bass & Greene has agreed to provide pro bono legal services. She does not believe that the deed restriction would prevent the Town from moving forward. It will need to go through probate process where a judge could require the Town to track down the heirs. The judge could also remove the deed restrictions because of the age of the document, in which case the Town could move ahead. The next step would be for Stantec to come in and perform a structural review of the building. NeighborWorks would also look at the building for potential housing. A. Smith recommended allowing the legal counsel to move forward with the probate process. Chairman Sirak recommended consulting with the Heritage Commission because of the historical value of the building. He also recommended submitting options and recommendations to the Council. He thanked Ms. Manchester for her pro bono services. The matter will be presented to the Council for approval.

Economic Development Workshop Report

J. Duffy stated the Planning Board took advantage of the workshop through the CTAP program sponsored by the Central Regional Planning. The Chairman of the Pittsfield Economic Committee attended spoke about how they started their committee and what they have accomplished. They have brought in wireless access to their Main Street Program to attract people to visit the downtown area. They were able to raise \$100,000 at the Town Meeting for Economic Development without having a plan in place.

There were discussions on issues related to gateways of Hooksett. The Town needs to have a “welcome” sign. Alden volunteered to serve as Chair of the Beautification Committee.

Mission Statement/Goals/Objectives Discussion

The Mission Statement/Goals/Objectives were adopted as presented (draft form 12/4/09).

Economic Zone Development Process and Metro Update

Regional economic zones (formerly called CROP zones) – Metro is working to identify the zones through infrastructure and improvements. The transportation lines, major highways, secondary roads, commuter rail and location of stations will be added. The vacant parcels will be included, as well as information on whether they have any environmental constraints. Currently, 24 communities have adopted economic zones. Tax credits up to \$40,000 per year based on job creation are available. This is a tool for recruiting development. Metro realizes that towns may not have the resources to do certain things in order to implement economic zones. Metro will continue to provide assistance to communities. They are hoping that all of the communities will update their websites and provide basic parcel information on available land. J. Munn will provide a list of the Brownsfield sites located in Hooksett. It was suggested that Hooksett review their maps and determine the proposed economic zones. Towns need incentives to draw developers into their community. This program provides a credit for the Business Profit Tax and the Business Enterprise Tax.

Other updates

Bass Pro – The Committee agreed that they need to be more proactive. A letter will be sent to Bass Pro stating that the Town is in support of addressing their concerns. Alden will follow up with this.

Cabela's – no discussion.

Exit 10 – this area of Town is lacking sewer. Discussions are underway in this regard.