**Minutes Economic Development Committee meeting April 8, 2015**

Attendees: Erik Espling, Chuck Osgood, Pat Rice and Sarah Zmistowski

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm. There being no changes to the meeting minutes of March 4, 2015, Sarah moved to accept them as written, Chuck seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

* **Penobscot River Restoration Project**- Laura Rose Day gave an update to the status of the project indicating that they are in the final stages of river shoreline and embankment restoration. Other planned improvements to the area are a boat carry trail, an informational/educational kiosk, a small parking area to allow access and some plantings. She showed us a proposed sketch of the area and indicated she will send us a more updated one to include in the minutes. All of the improvements should be finished by the contractor by summer. She stated that the mission was to restore the river fishery and to allow people access. Ms. Day mentioned that the power generating building had to be taken down after there was no viable response to a RFP that the trust put out for its development and they were not in a position to mothball the building for any length of time. The Project now is at a point where they would like to transfer the land to some other entity so long as the entity would care for the land consistent with the Restoration Projects mission. (*It is our understanding then that this restricted land would be very limited to any commercial development).* With all of this in mind, it was suggested that the committee work on a statement to the town council recommending that the council pursue the transfer of this restored land to the Town rather than some other outside entity. Action item: Draft statement to Town Council
* **TIF**- Sarah outlined the main aspects of the TIF drafted in March 1998 which was originally designed to help bring the Casco Bay Energy plant to Veazie. An amendment to the original TIF was also discussed but not detail yet because we did not have an updated map or the time to review all of the information contained in the amendment. The amendment does include the building and surrounding area of the Veazie Community Center. The committee still needs to understand this amendment and the designation of funds from the TIF. Action item: Sarah will review the amendment for discussion during our next meeting.
* **The Veazie Community Center**- This was put on the agenda as a result of a March 30th e-mail from the Town manager that said “The Council would like a discussion on ideas the group may have on the community center re-use.” Three members of the Veazie Community Center Reuse Committee were present and communicated to the committee what they had done through grant funding and fundraising to make improvements to the community building. They said that they had been working on this project for some time and have made improvements to the roof, insulation, windows and boiler. Additional improvements are planned to get make it handicap accessible and put in a sprinkler system. These additional improvements may cost between $40,000-$70,000. Without these improvements, the building cannot be used for public functions. A number of suggestions were discussed that can be divided into two groups—public functions-such as meetings and community gatherings and private functions-that may be a source of funding such as co-working space, exercise classes or business incubator. A third option for the building use would be to sell it to another entity that would use it for housing students. It was noted that the zoning for the building had been changed to residential so that it would preclude commercial usage of the space. After further discussion the consensus was that the Economic Development Committee would defer to the already established Veazie Community Center re-use committee for action regarding this building. Action item: Pat will attend the April 13th town council meeting to answer any questions directed to the Ec. Dev. Committee.
* **Business Assets—**Mr. Birch did not show up for his scheduled presentation to talk about Veazie business assets. However, discussion did take place about potential areas for development such as the buildings on School Street. Erik mentioned that Collabric is a very vibrant company in tension fabric structures for conference displays. Their website is <http://www.collabric.com> Action item: Pat will contact Mr. Birch to attend next meeting.
* **Next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday May 6th.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm