

REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday April 2, 2019

Peter Beal called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm in room 14 at the Town Hall in the presence of:

Voting Members: William Bellavance, Sean Delaney, Peter Beal, Joseph Lauria, and David O'Neil

Missing: David Ferreira, Michael Prisco

Associate Members: Tom Ollila, Chris Hayden, Pat Lee

Non-Members: Danielle McKnight – Town Planner, Michael Gilleberto – TA, Andrew Schultz – Select Board Member

Mr. Beal opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

1.) Approve Minutes from January 22, 2019

- a. Mr. Bellavance made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2019, meeting, as amended. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Neil. 5-0-0 in favor.

2.) Tax Incentive Programs

- a. Mr. Beal shared ideas about how to categories different types of projects and incentives: Site/structure not being utilized (existing ownership), site/structure being underutilized (existing ownership), site/structure being adequately utilized (existing ownership), and site/structure changing ownership. It was discussed whether acquisition costs should be included in total investment when considering benefits. It was agreed that this should be considered. Mr. Gilleberto and Ms. McKnight are asked to find out what other towns are doing – are they considered case by case? Mr. Bellavance has looked into this and cannot find any uniform rules to be applied to all cases in any towns. There are questions about how we should standardize our approach and concerns about fairness.
- b. Discussion: what should be done if a person's value (and tax bill) increase but not their business? Assessment is done based on income and expense, not by the fair market value of the property, and it's self-reported. Mr. Gilleberto and Ms. McKnight are asked for additional information on how commercial properties are assessed.
- c. There are some concerns about whether a tax incentive is worthwhile to owners (will this really offset their costs enough to matter?), and concerns about the town losing revenue. It is noted that these programs are about reducing increases based on new value, not lowering current tax bills.
- d. Suggestions to target owners of those properties that have nothing coming in for tax revenue; and to provide tax incentives for beautification, minimizing curb cuts or set improvements such as sidewalks etc.
- e. We also need to discuss how long we want the payoff to be, etc. do we want a sliding scale depending on how much money/how big a project we are

considering? Consider, for example, how many CPC requirements for site plan review have been met when we think about their benefits.

- f. The question is asked whether we have been approached by anyone wanting to redevelop a property? Mr. Hayden mentions the Heffron site at 66 Winter Street.

3.) 70 Concord St.

- a. Mr. Delaney and Mr. Schultz recap the meeting on this property with DEP. The Town and DEP have a tax lien. Mr. Schultz and Mr. Delaney discuss the site's history of contamination. There is still water contamination in the bedrock fractures, and DEP will require a permanent cleanup. If the Town takes ownership, we could be responsible for contamination. The biggest problem there is the lack of sewer because septic is problematic due to the contamination – we would need a lower wastewater use. EPA brownfields grants are available to the Town, but not to a private owner. A backup well for Reading is 1000 feet away. We will want to study to see extent of contamination. It's not possible to tie into the sewer connection at Riverpark because it's too far away.
- b. Mr. Delaney said we had follow up questions - can we get access to the site, or get DEP to test and we would take that from purchase price? We are waiting for answers on this. What happens if we foreclose and put it out to RFP, but then no deal takes place? We could cancel the foreclosure.
- c. The consensus of the EDC is they would be supportive but would like more information. They would like to know more about the costs of an assessment, what it would take to clean up the site, etc. Additional information is needed from DEP, then they would like to discuss this again at the next meeting.

4.) Old/New Business:

- a. Mr. Ollila says we are seeing a trend in people switching to electric vehicles. This is not a problem for single family homes and garages, but in multi-family dwellings, there's no way to do this without spending huge amounts, to put in a charging station. Some communities are working with planning boards etc. to require that for new construction of new multi-unit buildings, developers at least install pipes and infrastructure charging stations. Mr. Bellavance says he is adding charging stations in his properties; it's cheap, the state pays for most of it. Mr. Ollila says it can be expensive, especially if people don't know about the state programs. For the next CPC meeting, Mr. Bellavance can put this on agenda for discussion. It's suggested the Town ask Pulte if we can put in the infrastructure in their buildings.
- b. The EDC's next meeting will be May 21.

5.) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Delaney motioned to adjourn the meeting

Seconded by: Mr. Bellavance

Voted by:

Mr. Beal	AYE		
Mr. Bellavance	AYE	Mr. Lauria	AYE
Mr. Delaney	AYE	Mr. O'Neil	AYE

UNANIMOUS (5-0-0)

ADJOURN 7:20pm

4/2/19

DATE

Danielle McKnight

DANIELLE MCKNIGHT,
TOWN PLANNER