



Town of Fairhaven

Department of Planning and Economic Development

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2021 MAY -6 P 12: 19

Fairhaven Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Thursday, February 18, 2021 - 6:30p.m.

FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

- 1. Quorum & Attendance: Present:** Kevin McLaughlin, Cathy Melanson, Jessica Fidalgo, Robert Espindola, Eddie Lopez and Todd MacGregor
Absent: Bernie Roderick (Mr. McLaughlin stated that Mr. Roderick has a conflict from now until the May Town Meeting with Finance Committee.)

Mr. McLaughlin opened the EDC Meeting at 6:33p.m. Mr. Foley, Director of Planning and Economic Development, read the revised open meeting law into for the record.
- 2. Review and Approve minutes of January 21, 2020:** Robert Espindola made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Jessica Fidalgo. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote by Cathy Melanson, Robert Espindola and Jessica Fidalgo (members that were present at the meeting.)
- 3. Goals of Economic Development:** Standard on all agenda's in case anyone has any questions on what the goals of the EDC are.
- 4. Town Fees:** Mr. McLaughlin stated this subject came up at the previous meeting to try and see whether there is an option to relieve any fees for business owners affected by COVID-19. Mr. Espindola stated that he did bring this up at a Select Board meeting along with the Interim Town Administrator, Ms. Graves who stated they have to dip into free cash to balance the budget and she doesn't see any relief happening at this time. Mr. McLaughlin stated he understood that but perhaps his suggestion on fees could be to postpone them for a time. He wasn't sure what fees were actually coming up for business owners but stated he'd be more than happy to join in on a conversation regarding it. Mr. Espindola stated the immediate feedback was that we are not able to eliminate or cut fees. He stated he did discuss deferment with the board but nothing came of it. Mr. Espindola stated he will bring it up again at the next Select Board meeting on Monday (2/22/2021).
- 5. Rt. 6/240/Opportunity Zone Redevelopment Study Town Planner Update:** Mr. Foley reviewed the Rt. 6/240 Redevelopment Study and the concept of creating a 40R Overlay area on some of it. He explained the state now has a one stop community for growth (ten grants under one umbrella) grant program. Mr. Foley said he first needs to submit a letter of interest before an application. He explained the different grants available: MassWorks (\$500,000 to \$5 million); Urban Agenda, 43D Expedited Permitting, Housing Choice, Community Capital Grants, MA downtown Initiative, new rural development fund, brownfields, site readiness and a new program that might be helpful for underutilized properties. He stated once he fills out the letter of interest they will advise him what other grants he may be eligible for.

Mr. Foley stated the Complete Streets Policy was approved by the Selectmen and MassDOT and he is working with the Advisory and Bike committees to finalize the Prioritization Plan.

Mr. Foley stated they had been awarded \$1 million dollars in the Transportation Bond Bill for upgrades on Bridge Street.

Mr. Foley said he spoke and had a good conversation with former executive secretary Jeffrey Osuch today who enlightened him on different projects that happened years ago and found some interesting information about the landfill, and how approximately one-third of it is wasted space.

Mr. Foley reported that after a few hurdles, Oxford School/Stratford Group will be moving through in the next few weeks with a building permit.

Referring to his slides, Mr. Foley reviewed his draft five priority areas for the One Stop for Growth. They include different areas in town including the resilience of working waterfront; traditional mixed use areas, downtown, Benoit Square, Sconticut Neck Road.

Mr. Foley explained the application process for the grants. Mr. Lopez said if Mr. Roderick was present he thinks he would ask about the old drive-in theatre. Mr. Foley said there's potential for development with that property and with the change of districts.

Mr. Foley touched upon an idea was to look at where businesses that outgrow there location or neighborhood could park safely but not necessarily near residents. He said with home occupations growing due to COVID and pre-existing non-conforming uses growing that it may be a good idea to find a spot for a parking lot for commercial and industrial uses.

6. Any other business reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the posting of this meeting.

Mr. Espindola stated that Select Board had been interviewing candidates for TA recently and he noticed that the candidates had stated that there was not a lot of Economic Development Committee's around the state. Mr. Espindola stated he wanted to recognize Mr. Foley for being on top of the grants that are available and for all his efforts with the grants. He is happy to see him pursue the grants, if he didn't he doesn't know if the Town would even know they were available.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if it was time they discuss their committee's budget.

Mr. Foley apologized as he hasn't put it on the agenda, but will put it in for discussion next month. However he stated that he left the budget level-funded as last year, which was the same \$8,000. Mr. Foley stated they have spent \$1,000 toward minutes. There was also monies spent on the FXM updates last year; and monies spent on the EDA match. He will bring all the accurate numbers to the next meeting for discussion.

Mr. Espindola asked about the vacant building survey. He explained how the Selectboard and Planning Board get 20 hours of SRPEDD hours and perhaps what could be utilized under those hours for them to do for the Town. He said perhaps they all need to think about what they would like to use those hours for, as sometimes the hours don't get used and they absolutely should if they are available to the Town.

Mr. Foley stated that the vacant property survey is on his radar list, however he needs to think about how SRPEDD could best assist him.

Todd McGregor made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Cathy Melanson. Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote at 7:25p.m.

7. Next Meeting March18, 2021

Respectively Submitted, Patricia A. Pacella