

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

August 29, 2017

MINUTES

Present: George Sterling, Jerry Galus, Barbara Miller, Chubb Whitten, James Kelly, Adam Hamilton, and Dave Smith

Also Present: Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development.

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:30 and began with introductions.

Minutes: A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Hamilton) to approve the Minutes of July 25, 2017 as written with all in favor.

RFQ Responses and Next Steps:

Mr. Throop began by noting they had received two responses from individuals. Chamber of Commerce Director Sean Ryan noted two other firms (Hinckley Allen in Concord and Firebrand International in Portsmouth) had expressed interest as well but both expressed they did not have enough time to respond. A brief discussion about the deadline for the RFQ followed and the members decided to extend the deadline to September 15, 2017. When asked, Mr. Throop noted the two individuals who had responded were Kim Graham and Mary Lou O'Neil. Mr. Throop also asked for assistance in the review of proposals and the interview process. Mr. Ryan noted having more candidates reduces the ability to elicit any negativity in the hiring process. "If you don't meet the criteria, you don't get the job" he said. Members that volunteered to assist Mr. Throop were Mr. Smith, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Ryan and Ms. Dietsch who agreed to meet September 19, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. to start the review the proposals.

Library of the Future:

Library Director Corinne Chronopoulos gave a brief presentation and history of the first free public library supported by taxation in the world. She noted the 1833 Society was formed in 2011 to raise money for improvements and explained how the Library's vision falls in line with the Town's Master Plan.

The presentation included information on the economic impact of the Library. "It is not just a warehouse for books, it is a connection center for people providing technology and workforce training and has a crucial role" she said. Ms. Chronopoulos reviewed statistics on investments in the nation's libraries as well as the revenue potential of the Library as an event venue (estimated conservatively at \$90,000.00 a year).

Ms. Chronopoulos continued with a brief history of the building whose construction was completed in 1833 through a public/private partnership. “It was a public/private partnership then and should be now as well” she said. She then went on to review major issues with the current building (ADA noncompliant with poor physical accessibility, system problems (fire alarm, lighting, electrical), poor air quality and ventilation, insufficient HVAC and thermostat deficiencies. Noting many patrons bring in their own devices into the Library she simply said “we do not have enough outlets in the right spots for them.”

Ms. Chronopoulos projected a list of investments that began with the thousands of hours of volunteer efforts. She reviewed the purchase of land for additional parking (\$75,000) the architectural fees for pre-design and schematic design phases (\$270,000) pre-construction management fees (\$8,500) and Capital Campaign expenses (\$200,000). She noted a list of reports from 2004 to present “to show the work that has been done to get us where we are today. This did not just start” she said. She also reviewed grant applications and accessing CDFR and LCHIP funds.

Ms. Chronopoulos reviewed the project timeline, an alternative location for services throughout construction and the budget. “The estimated cost is 8.5 million dollars” she said noting “6.5 million for the construction and the difference for architectural design and services. We have raised 2.3 million dollars and hope to raise 5.5 total, asking the town for 3 million dollars.” Ms. Chronopoulos concluded by briefly reviewing grant applications, the project timeline, and the budget

A schematic video tour of the new library followed with discussion about light glare, ceiling heights, storage, after school and children’s programs and collaboration/partnerships with maker space organizations such as MATX. Mr. Ryan noted the focus on the Library and the potential for a Community College has sparked interest and a potential for a new hotel in town.

Master Plan/Zoning Updates

Mr. Throop told the members that the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan was basically in his hands for finalization and the Housing Chapter’s subcommittee was moving toward its draft phase “and hopefully done in November.” He also noted he was working on zoning updates (specifically simplification of the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Districts I and II). “We are hosting a workshop September 13th here at the Library” he said adding “with subsequent public hearings October 16th and November 20th (both at the Town House) for public input.”

Strategic Planning Subcommittee:

Ms. Dietsch began by identifying the members of the subcommittee as Mr. Sterling, Ms. Miller, Mr. Galus, herself, Mr. Throop and volunteer Christine Dennler and said “we need to meet to review and update our progress and goals.” The members agreed on a meeting date of September 26th following the EDA meeting that morning.

Ms. Dietsch then introduced Christine Dennler (a new Peterborough resident with marketing and media experience) who will be assisting the subcommittee with implementing marketing related goals and action plans. Ms. Dennler told the members she was happy to be of service and looked forward to making the information new residents are looking for easier to find.

Broadband Committee Update:

Ms. Dietsch reviewed the action items from their meeting August 16th. She also recommended that they expand the domain from broadband to telecommunications (“the two are interlinked, especially with 5G cellphone access” she said) and that they modify the name of the Broadband Committee to the *Telecom Committee*. “It is critical to extend telecom services to all parts of community” she said adding “there is about a quarter of the town not served now.” Ms. Dietsch also noted the importance that the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment are informed of that when people come in with their applications. From the audience Ms. Miller interjected the Board of Selectmen were working on negotiations with Comcast for the contract renewal in April of 2018. She went on to say “they *are* in compliance with the contract we have but they would like to talk about expanding broadband service here.”

Ms. Dietsch added “and work at the legislative level is continuing as well.” *This refers to an amendment that would allow a municipality to bond broadband but not become an ISP (Internet Service Provider).*

A motion was made/seconded (Whitton/Smith) to change the Broadband Committee name to the Telecom Committee with all in favor.

Employer’s Forum Recap:

Mr. Galus reported they’d met for a second time about a month ago. “It was well attended with about 30 people representing 6-7 major manufacturers and all the area school districts.” He went on to say “we came away with 14 action items (AIs) that we are working on including work-ready programs integrated into both the workplace and the schools.”

Nashua Community College Update:

Mr. Whitten began by saying “we are doing well.” He noted the USDA loan submission date was October 1st. Mr. Whitten noted Nashua Community College President Lucille Jordan was difficult to get a hold of adding “I think Ross Gittell (Community College System of New Hampshire Chancellor) is getting more involved. We’ll let *them* handle the process.”

Other Business:

Mr. Throop spoke briefly about the public hearing for the South Peterborough TIF District (as an agenda item on the Board of Selectmen’s meeting) slated for September 19, 2017. He noted a special Town Meeting to be held October 26th. Mr. Throop briefly reviewed the purpose of a TIF District and how the incremental tax savings are nvested back into infrastructure within the TIF borders. He told the members South Peterborough has been identified as an appropriate area to provide a great source of opportunity for residential, retail development, pedestrian and biker independence and affordable housing options. “It can be strengthened to create neighborhoods with great pedestrian potential” he said.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Next Meeting: September 26, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant