

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

March 26, 2019

MINUTES

Present: Adam Hamilton, Christine Dennler, Nate Morison, James Kelly, Jerry Gallus, Chubb Whitton, and Jeanne Dietsch (via phone)

Also Present: Peter Throop, Laura Norton, and Kristin Bixby, Office of Community Development

Chair Hamilton called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. without a need for introductions.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Morison) to approve the Minutes of February 26, 2018 as written with all in favor.

Per request of Ms. Dietsch the agenda was adjusted to address the continued discussion of the Firebrand International presentation February 26th. Before getting started Ms. Dennler announced, “we are not on Twitter so we can add that to our (social media) platforms.” She presented a tear sheet from AAA Magazine that had a feature on the upcoming National Library Week which mentioned the Peterborough Town Library as the first free public Library supported by taxation in the nation. She also noted a free cooperative recycling program sponsored by the New England Recovery Recycling Association (NRRRA), a non-profit organization that offers a mobile recycling trailer created to assist special event organizers with collecting recyclables. “In case we ever had a big Woodstock event in town” she said, “you just pick it up, collect recyclables, and return it empty.”

Discussion on the Firebrand International Presentation:

This is a review of Dawns’ (Firebrand’s) promotional strategies including Branding (consistency); Communications (selling ourselves); and the Ecosystem (leadership and its relationship to the EDA).

Ms. Dennler noted, “we need to decipher who is doing what and how to designate who is responsible for her ideas (EDA versus Ecosystem/Hub and Spokes). She went on to say, “we are paying attention to the plan and getting ready to delegate who can (will) pick up the ball on her recommendations.”

Mr. Throop projected a highlighted copy of the action plan pointing out the discussion at the last meeting included establishing a communication pipeline for postings, media engagements, and press releases on social media as well as developing collaborative, regional initiatives and branding. “Besides branding and

communication, we need to look at the leadership of the Ecosystem in relationship to the EDA, the Town Meeting presentation of our accomplishments, and work force housing” he said.

Having joined the meeting via phone Ms. Dietsch briefly spoke about branding. She began by noting a regional collaboration between the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, Yankee Magazine and the City of Keene followed and noted that this group had agreed to brand Peterborough as the *Heart of Monadnock*. Ms. Dietsch noted “fortunately at a recent Hub meeting we decided to call ourselves the same thing. We have been known as the heart of New England for several years, so we thought that appropriate.” She went on to note her concern that no one from Peterborough (besides Chamber of Commerce Director Sean Ryan) had been involved including Hub or EDA members. “I think the first issue is to discuss whether or not we agree on the branding names,” she said.

Mr. Throop echoed his concern about the lack of input from these groups with Ms. Dietsch noting, “for tourism purposes and reasons I think we can live with it. If Keene wants to say they are the heart of Monadnock, they are the ones stretching it. We are closer.” Ms. Dietsch also noted her concern about the financial aspects of things. Noting the potential economic and development funding from the state she said, “with Keene running the show I fear it will end up with Peterborough and Jaffrey getting nothing. That is my concern.”

Ms. Dennler asked for clarification on regional branding efforts versus local efforts in attracting business and new citizens. Ms. Dennler asked, “there is a difference between people who visit and people who want to live here? Did I miss the boat?” Ms. Dietsch explained what is integral to branding Peterborough’s attraction, “and then Peterborough in the mix of the region.” She also suggested Ms. Dennler should be on this new committee (along with Mr. Ryan).

Chair Hamilton noted that he had been a part of a very similar group years ago “and then the EDA kind of picked up where we’d left it back then, I was not aware that they were meeting again.” Mr. Throop replied, “the coincidence is not lost on me, and Southwest Region Planning Commission is also involved.” Ms. Dietsch concluded, “we need to find out who this group is.”

A brief discussion about their next steps followed which included a discussion on the implementation of the plan they had been given (Firebrand International). Chair Hamilton noted, “let’s move on with Dawn’s plan. This is a positive kick forward for us with another group following our lead, that is fantastic.”

Additional Support from Firebrand:

The previous conversation was a natural segue to this agenda item. The members agreed they would like to continue a relationship with Ms. Wivell. Mr. Throop projected a highlighted portion of the Action Plan that Ms. Wivell had produced. He told the Members, “work on this first if you will. We need to know what the EDA feels is important and wants to focus on. If Dawn continues, we need to know what she would be helping us go forward with.”

Mr. Throop noted the importance of the spokes reaching out to larger networks and beyond Peterborough. “Some spokes are making progress, and some are struggling,” he said. He reiterated the need for consistency and collaboration in branding and a communications pipeline within the Ecosystem itself. Mr. Morison added the acknowledging the importance of buy-in from the businesses. “They don’t want to waste the opportunity to invest in this,” he said.

A motion was made/seconded (Denner/Morison) to deploy Ms. Wivell for future consultation and advice with all in favor.

Mr. Throop suggested assigning members to review portion of the Action Plan to come up with recommendations in terms of priorities and report back to the Chairman by a specific date. “That or appoint a subcommittee” he said. Ms. Dietsch suggested creating a spreadsheet in Goggle Docs as well as having the original SWOT Analysis available at Town Meeting. Mr. Throop noted he would email the Action Plan with instruction to go through and evaluate for priorities and return comments (who does what) to the Chairman by April 12th.

In closing Mr. Morison asked about leadership of the HUB with Chair Hamilton replying, “that is determined by the HUB. We birthed that baby and the baby has to move on.”

Recommendations from West Peterborough TIF Advisory Board:

Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett was present to review these recommendations. He noted the West Peterborough TIF Advisory Board had met about a week ago to discuss the upcoming budget process as it relates to them. Mr. Bartlett reviewed the TIF revenues and expenses for the last year with an end of year balance of \$914,266 and reviewed a financial update that outlined the expenditure of \$71,500 for repairs and maintenance, \$10,000 for staff support and \$76,500 for TIF projects. He noted these special projects included addressing drainage issues on Overseer’s Row, extension of the sidewalk and guardrail maintenance from Robbe Farm Road to Old Dublin Road, and installation of “Village of West Peterborough” signs and a new bench in or around Texeira Park. “That \$76,000 will be added to the budget at deliberative” he said.

Mr. Bartlett concluded by noting the West Peterborough TIF Advisory Board had voted to approve the requests and recommend them to the Planning Board who would, in turn vote to recommend the to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Galus interjected a bit of back ground noting the residents of West Peterborough had been queried as to what they thought was necessary for improvements. He noted “14 projects, some unmanageable were identified” he said adding “and price estimates were collected, that is how we came to \$76,500.”

A brief discussion about estimated revenues, bond payments and TIF sunset (scheduled for 2024) with an established expendable trust for maintenance in the district followed.

A motion was made/seconded (Galus/Kelly) to recommend \$158,000 be allocated from the West Peterborough TIF District fund for the stated maintenance and repair, offset of staff support, and special projects cited with all in favor but Chair Hamilton who abstained with all in favor.

Recommendations from South Peterborough TIF Advisory Board:

Mr. Throop noted the south Peterborough TIF District had also recently met for the first time. He noted the projected revenue for 2019 was \$166,000 in collected funds adding “and with recurring new assessed values being added it will continue to grow. We estimate revenue will be over \$300,00 a year” he said.

Mr. Bartlett noted much like the West Peterborough TIF District “we are asking for \$10,000 to offset staff support.” Mr. Throop added, “this is a new TIF District, so the ask is for fiscal year 2019 and 2020.” “So you are looking at \$20,000” interjected Mr. Kelly. Mr. Throop replied, “yes.”

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Galus) to recommend \$20,000 be allocated from the South Peterborough TIF District fund for the stated offset of staff support with all in favor.

Other Business:

With full-member positions open and (currently) no alternates the Members briefly discussed Board recruitment. When Mr. Galus encouraged the Members to think about a specific skill set that may be lacking, Mr. Whitton asked, “what about a large employer?” It was noted the new Human Resources Director at New Hampshire Ball Bearings and Eric Burbank of So Clean Corporation may be good candidates. Mr. Throop also suggested recruiting from the Rivermead and Scott Farrar campuses. Mr. Morison noted a representative from the merchant’s

community may be beneficial. Ms. Dennler interjected, “let’s also please think about recruiting more women on this Board.” Chair Hamilton added, “yes, thank you, my thoughts exactly.” Potential candidates were identified as Laura Gingras from MCH, Lara Shea from Scott Farrar, Eric Burbank from So Clean Corporation and the new Human Resources Director from NHBB.

Next Meeting: April 16th, 2019 at 12:00 Noon

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant