

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2017

8:00 am

Ashland Fire Station

Committee Members:

Steve Felton (Chairperson), Beno Lamontagne, Susan MacLeod, Fran Newton, *Ex Officio* Selectman

Others Present: Charlie Smith, Town Administrator; David Toth, W&S Commissioner; Eli Badger, ZBA Chair; Mardean Badger, Planning Board; Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation.

Minutes: June 27, 2017 – Motion to accept by Fran Newton; Steve Felton seconded. All in favor.
August 22, 2017 -- Motion to accept by Fran Newton; Beno Lamontagne seconded. All in favor.

General Discussion on Progress:

1. Outreach education: Steve proposed that we create a one-page handout to summarize the mill project with bullet points that include links for more in depth information.

2. What do businesses need from us and we from them? Our effort to improve and expand infrastructure supports growth for established businesses and attracts more businesses and entrepreneurs with more jobs and economic activity. Example in Town is the Water & Sewer receiving station will bring in more revenue as it expands the service to more haulers who can increase their workforce. The availability of high speed fiber optics is now more accessible through town with the school and town offices hooked up to the service. This committee working with other groups in town and with outside agencies is laying the foundation for all this to happen. One success story is crucial to get the business and at-large communities engaged.

3. Let's get the word out. Fran suggested doing an article to highlight progress and accomplishments of the last five years. She will contact Donna Rhodes from Salmon Press about doing a piece.

4. What makes a community more attractive? After brownfields process is completed, there will be a better sense of options for direction to go with the mill area. We will engage mill owners only at crucial stages for developing the action plan and assist the owners in marketing and seeking financial support. To market, advertise the strengths: Abundant water supply, Sewer capacity, lower electricity rates, Highway access, a commercial Main Street, quality schools, proximity to university, commercial buildings with capacity, land available for residential and some commercial/industrial expansion, recreational opportunities, home of the Common Man.

Jack Dugan, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (501C3)

<http://www.monadnock-development.org/index.html>

- There are 10 regional economic development corporations in the state, each with its own specialties or focus.
- MEDC provides loans of all sizes, for real estate development and re-development, and assists with other areas and in other territories.
 - Loans to growing businesses
 - Industrial real estate development
 - Real estate development downtown and infill development (re-purpose abandoned buildings)

- Mr. Dugan presented a slide show of various projects they have been involved in (with before and after images) and discussed the variety of funding sources they use. (Note: he will share the PowerPoint with Steve.)
 - One example: Railroad land redevelopment project utilized many funding sources – formerly a railroad freight yard with Brownfield sites; project included infill development, re-purposed and new buildings, mixed use commercial and condominiums, multiple lots, buried utilities, bike path, amphitheatre and public space.
- Mixed use concept is different for every project.
- They do not “take” any property; they buy property, often creatively, but with an end use in mind.
- Each project uses a combination of many different funding sources.
- A “for profit” developer has to balance its own desires with the community’s needs/wants.
- A “not for profit” developer opens up a wide array of funding sources.
- Ashland would need to work with the Grafton County Economic Development Council, but MEDC might be able to offer assistance. MEDC is currently working with GCEDC on a joint project.
- Many sources of funding require that you have an end plan for property re-development and attraction of new businesses (e.g., New Markets, Brownfield cleanup).
- Mr. Dugan recommended that Ashland get voter approval to use RSA 79-E. He also noted that Ashland’s economic profile makes the town eligible for several sources of funding, such as New Markets, USDA Rural Development loans, and tax credits.
- Next step – investigate RSA 79-E (Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive).
- Next step – invite Grafton County Economic Development Council to a meeting.
- Next step – invite NH Business Finance Authority to a meeting.

Other business:

1. Email with list of proposed projects has been sent to Ben Amsden at PSU. He will get back to us when he has lined up interested parties to meet with us. Email letter to Ward D’Elia regarding architect’s rendering – no response to date.

Action items:

- After date set, invite mill owners – AEDC
- Compile metrics for properties – Eli Badger (?)
- Follow up with Jeff Hayes on warrant issues – Steve
- Compile list of groups and venues for presentations – Charlie
- Contact architects – Cheryl, Tim Smith
- For action plan to include tax credits, arrange meeting to include businesses and bank reps and Donna Lane to explain the program
- Invite Water & Sewer Commissioners to next meeting; this precedes asking Alan Brigham, EDA to come to address infrastructure and grants available – Fran
- Speak to Donna Rhodes about publicity for Ashland economic development efforts -- Fran
- Confirm Fire Station availability for next meeting – Steve

Meeting adjourned at 10:21 am.

The next meeting at the Fire Station, September 19, 6:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Susan MacLeod