

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

April 5, 2018

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Committee Members:

Steve Felton, Chair, Beno Lamontagne, Cheryl Cox, Susan MacLeod, Fran Newton, *Ex Officio* Selectman;

Others Present: Levi Bradley, Fire Chief Steve Heath, David Toth

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.

Plan for presentation to BOS on April 16, 2018: To be included:

1. Brownfields Report with Tim Andrews of Nobis presenting conclusions and interpretation with overview of liability; Jeff Hayes to advise on some legal and procedural questions
2. Review summit meeting in November in which agencies and mill property owners participated and contacts were established
3. Recommend next step is a complete analysis of advantages and downsides of a municipal taking for clean-up to prepare to sell to prospective developer(s) and return to the tax roll. Legal guidance necessary, and a PlanNH charrette may be beneficial at some point

Narrative: Brownfields completion gives “innocent landowner” protection from identified environmental issues with the property. The biggest perceived risk previously discussed with mill property owners and fire department is fire in the vacant building, a threat to surrounding properties and the environment. It currently is an attractive nuisance, and potential economic development not viable without the initial clean-up which can spur further funding and improvements. Doing nothing is not an option. In response to “it's going to cost us (taxpayers) money”, it is an investment that will show return; best case will reimburse town for back taxes plus interest and costs incurred, and return as a taxable property with potential for job creation. Look for examples of other towns accomplishing this – Groveton, Franklin, Bristol, Rindge (from Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation?).

Briefly discussed renter situation in the Ashland Properties' boiler room building.

Still have some outstanding questions on property and process to be answered. Still inquiring about knowledgeable counsel. A Board of Selectmen vote to get all legal answers with explicit instructions and a deadline may be the way to have all the information needed to move forward on a decision.

A structural assessment of the white building should be included for best decision on whether to demolish or rehabilitate. Seek funding for this.

Fire Chief Heath reported on his consultation with former Berlin Fire Chief regarding the process a fire department goes through when a dilapidated building is ignored by the property owner and becomes a hazard to the public.

Did you wake up with a foreboding sense of deja vu? Like you've lived the exact same day over and over again?
Phil Connors (Bill Murray) in *Groundhog Day*

Action items:

- Contact PlanNH – Fran
- Contact for legal referrals and find out Glidden's attorney? -- Fran
- Research grant opportunities at Lamson Library – any and all
- Research mill takings and rehab – Levi
- write-up of Groveton effort – Beno
- Draft points for presentation; send reminders to Tim Andrews and Jeff Hayes – Steve

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Next Meeting:

**Meeting with Board of Selectmen tentatively set for Monday, April 16, 2018, 6:30 pm AES Library
Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 6:30 pm at the Fire Station;**

Minutes submitted by Susan MacLeod