

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

December 16, 2014

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Steering Committee Members Present

Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox (Planning Board ex-officio), Steve Felton (Board of Selectmen ex-officio)

Absent with Notice

Jill White

Ad Hoc Committee Members Present

Scott Stephens (Plymouth Regional Chamber of Commerce)

Others present

Michael Capone, Fran Newton, Katie Maher

Michael Capone, Town Administrator for the town of Bristol, attended the meeting per request to discuss the process and milestones Bristol has experienced in revitalizing their downtown.

The basic idea of the Bristol revitalization was to “Get the downtown more pedestrian friendly.” They used Bristol’s 2008 Charrette as the “master plan” for their efforts.

Even though Bristol has limited parking in the downtown area, it was believed that making the area more pedestrian friendly would cause people to be more likely to walk about, increasing foot traffic in local businesses. This has proved to be true. Other important factors:

- “*It’s all about infrastructure*”. The town approved large water and sewer improvement project paid for 50/50% by taxation and user fees.
- *Involvement*: Held open meetings with local businesses, town water and sewer representatives, other town representatives, appropriate outside sources (including various state and regional economic development experts).
- The town took over the Mica building for non-payment of taxes and applied for and received a Brownfields grant.
- The town received additional grant money available at the time from the EPA. This money helped pay for an environmental study done on the Mica building.
- Created better utility of buildings.
- An addition to the town library was completed.
- Due to initial improvements, a local property owner decided to purchase and update several other empty buildings.
- Bristol has their tax maps on line.

Lessons learned:

- Having a lead individual to communicate, mediate and coordinate efforts is essential.
- You must have a plan of action and dedicated people.
- You must communicate throughout the process as people are directly affected, i.e. roads dug up.
- You must have an “event”, an initial success to get community involvement.
- You must be persistent. There is much competition for grants and other funding.
- You must be willing to ask for help and build relationships. There are many regional and state resources to be utilized. Identify and use every resource available.

This official meeting of the Ashland Economic Development Committee was called to order at 8:05 pm by Chairperson MacLeod.

Disposition of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Steve Felton to accept the minutes from the November 18, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded by Susan MacLeod. The vote was 3-0 in the affirmative.

New Ad-hoc Member

Rick Ash has agreed to be part of the committee has an ad-hoc member.

Additional Resources

- Glenn Coppelman, Economic Development Planner for North Country Council will attend the next meeting on Jan. 26.
- The EDA (Economic Development Agency) has grant money available quarterly. The money may be used to create an economic development plan.

Other Topics

- We should consider bringing all the mill building owners together to discuss the future options for this area.
- Chairman Susan MacLeod will be doing a presentation at the Jan. 8 financial forum meeting.
- We should consider working with other commercial or industrial land owners to determine their plans and future options for these properties.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

The next meeting will be held on **Monday, January at 6:30 pm** at the Ashland Fire Station, ***unless notified otherwise.***

Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox