

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

May 31, 2016

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Steering Committee Members Present

Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox (Planning Board ex-officio), Steve Felton (BOS Board ex-officio), Beno Lamontagne

Ad Hoc Committee Members Present

David Toth (Water & Sewer Commissioner)

Ad Hoc Committee Members Absent

Lee Nichols, Superintendent (Ashland Electric Department), Jae Demers

Others present

Fran Newton, Eli Badger, Mardean Badger

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by Chairperson MacLeod.

Welcome Sign

The marketing sub-group is exploring ways to raise funds for a welcome to Ashland sign. It was also discussed that planting trees on Main Street would be beneficial. The group will follow up with the some other groups in town to determine if there are opportunities for fund raising.

Grant Money

Many grants require matching funds by the town. Ashland has no capital reserves that could be used to in the event grant money became available. A short discussion took place on what would need to be done to make matching funds available. It would require a warrant article to have the town approve such funds.

Design Standards

As noted at the last meeting, a letter of invitation was sent out to twenty-four business and/or property owners to meet and discuss design standards at the Planning Board's work session on May 25. Five people had accepted the invitation but none of them were there. Three property owners attended, Andrew Lane, owner of multiple mill buildings, Alex Ray, owner of the Common Man and John Valpey of Commerce Properties. The conversation at this meeting included design standards and a many aspects of economic development. Topics included:

- All agreed that design standards were appropriate and needed, but need to be reasonable
- Design standards are planned to be added to the site plan regulations, not to the zoning ordinance, which will allow for more flexibility
- The benefits of a tree lined Main Street
- Ways to increase parking in town
- Ways to bring people to the lower village
- Benefits of 79E program
- The mill property needs to be the focus for developing Ashland
- We need to bring the mill building owners together to discuss

For more specific details of the discussion, see the Ashland Planning Board minutes from May 25, 2016.

Meeting with Mill Property Owners

Steve Felton reported that he has contacted the mill owners and have narrowed the date to June 21 or 22 at 6:30 for a meeting. Judy Smith has offered to host the meeting at Mill #3. The purpose of the meeting is to get feedback about what the various sections of the mill are currently being used for and to gather ideas on the best use(s) going forward. It was also agreed that Ashland Water and Sewer should attend. It was recommended that Jeff Hayes from LRPC should be invited. LRPC currently has money available for Brownfields assessments. This money is available for private owners. John Glidden, the previous owner of the entire mill should be asked if there are any historical plans or blueprints of the buildings.

General Discussion

Steve Felton asked and Beno Lamontagne stated it would be possible for a private property owner to lease land to the town for use as a parking area.

There are two new businesses in Ashland. Granite State Hedgehogs and Running Fox Antiques and Collectibles. Another business, a café is scheduled to come before the Planning Board tomorrow. Some discussion took place about the Ashland River walk. It starts at the Vintage Fret Shop and goes along the river, across Main Street to Mechanics Street for a short distance, for about sixty feet. It has however, not been maintained well. This area could be a wonderful spot for a restaurant, small brewery or many other enterprises.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 28 @ 6:30 at the fire station.

Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox