

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

December 5, 2017

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Committee Members:

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

Others Present: Anthony Adamsky, Eli Badger, Mardean Badger, Levi Bradley, Katie Maher

Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm.

Fall Meeting Debrief: All present gave their impressions of the summit.

- Very well attended and the room was full of positive energy and networking opportunities;
- Good first step but must lead to more tangible progress;
- Great press coverage with *Union Leader* pieces prior to and after the event;
- Feedback from officials from agencies invited was very positive;
- Need to go to the next step – action using all the suggestions from professionals we have gleaned; build on the momentum;
- Get focused on what is to be accomplished with specific component of the “mill site”. There are 20 buildings each with different uses and potential uses, in varying conditions, and 7 owners each needing, wanting, and willing to do different things. Define AEDC role.
- Based on feedback, the AEDC needs to state a goal and create a template of a strategic action plan; start with end goal and work back through the steps to get there;
- As an advisory committee, needs to communicate with the Select, Planning and Zoning Boards;
- Develop a timetable calendar of grant deadlines;
- Seek grants mentioned for hiring a planner to lead this project;
- AEDC cannot act as real estate brokers for the private property owners regarding the marketing, selling or leasing of their spaces. A suitable role is as coordinator to convene meetings that give the owners an opportunity to work on a common vision for collaborating rather than competing. The summit offered them an opportunity to make contact with agencies that could help them.
- Mardean compiled all the group discussion points and created a document that can be distributed.

Discussion then focused on the next step being the municipal taking of the Ashland Properties LLC properties.

- Ask legal about whether the option to not take it has liability consequences for the town.
- Brownfields Phase 2 report will reveal extent of hazardous materials and pollution. This report supports getting EPA clean-up funds that only go to the property owner.
- Work with Tax Collector to compile all information necessary for next step(s) in taking the Ashland Properties LLC property – tax and interest amount in arrears; for how long; role of mortgage holder; was a lien executed and filed;
- With this information, request that Town Administrator seek legal advice on process to take, and options town has to rehabilitate it to sell and at what price; leasing option; timelines;
- Present all this to the Board of Selectmen;
- Would it need to be a warrant article in 2018 or can it be done through the Public Hearing process [RSA 41:14-a]? A no vote would stop the process for at least a year.

- Communication of this to the public must be clear, factual, and carefully crafted to convey what the decision is based on, the process and outcome. There is sure to be strong resistance by some in town.
- Consult with Jeff Hayes, LRPC, Geoffrey Sewake, UNH Coop Ext, and Robin LeBlanc, PlanNH on this outreach.
- Form an Ad Hoc subcommittee to work on this project. Include W&S Commissioner(s) since their grant included supporting economic development in the mill site;
- Draft some project worksheets to define steps in this project;
- Ask Barry Gaw to participate in the meetings with the mill owners.

Action items:

- Draft questions for Fran and Town Administrator Smith to ask legal, both NHMA and Town Attorney -- Susan
- Work on draft worksheet documents -- Steve
- Research grant opportunities (USDA Rural, CDFR, etc.) planning funds
- Ask Jeff Hayes to attend another meeting
- Confirm Fire Station availability for next meetings – Steve
- Turkey chili recipe to Katie Maher -- Fran

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Next Meetings: Tuesday, Dec. 19, 6:30 pm at the Fire Station
Tuesday, January 16, 2018
Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Minutes submitted by Susan MacLeod