

TOWN OF ASHLAND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (EDC)

MINUTES

Wednesday December 18,2024

Utility Conference Room 6 Collins Street

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Peter Ott called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. In attendance were Selectman Charlie Bozzello, Peter Ott, Jennie Angell, Bonnie Bethune, Sean Collins and Jana Flores-Jon. Beno Lamontagne was not in attendance. Visitors present were Alan Cilley, Paula Finigan and Greg Finigan.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Sean Collins moved to approve 12/04/24 minutes with amendments. Jennie Angell seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Peter Ott moved to approve 12/11/24 minutes with amendments. Jennie Angell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **PROCEEDINGS:**
- Parks and Recreation budget items, i.e. general, campground/beach & afterschool program were reviewed.
 - Peter Ott recognized Charlie Bozzello to speak regarding Selectboard meeting on 12/16/24 where the EDC Committee was postponed in presenting the EDC's Edward N. Doggett Campground budgeting proposal. Charlie stated that many residents had attended the meeting due to the campground discussion originally being on the agenda which showed public interest.
 - Charlie reiterated that the EDC is responsible for recommendations for future campground pricing with detailed comparative pricing to other NH campgrounds.
 - Preparation for presentation to the Selectboard (for 1/06/25 meeting and future discussions):
 - 1) **Financial analysis of town-owned campground & budget proposal**
 - 2) **Proposed Warrant Article:** EDC to request a warrant article on 2025 ballot to solicit town support for beach maintenance and upgrade. In 2026, EDC will present a finalized plan and make a financial request to the town (researching grants, permits, etc.). Charlie Bozzello noted Ashland beach is an underutilized asset to the town.
 - 3) **EDC Mission Statement** - Resident Alan Cilley noted the former committee had a mission statement and Selectboard sanctioned the EDC in the past and will direct the EDC going forward. Mission statement from town website: *The Ashland Economic Development Committee's mission is to enhance the vitality of the local economy by supporting existing*

- 4) *business and attracting new businesses to Ashland, encouraging economic development consistent with the Ashland Master Plan, and promoting the spirit of the Town.*
- 5) **Town Budget** – Town tax rate is based on budgeted not actual expenditures. For Parks and Recreation (P&R) budget, the Summer and After School programs are self-funding due to direct payments, donations and campground fees. Traditionally, the general expenses of P&R have been covered by campground fees. Starting in 2022, the campground fees did not cover the P&R budget and do not include any maintenance/upgrade funds for the campground sites and buildings. Jennie Angell reminded the EDC that the town can only charge what market will bear based on campground amenities offered to renters.
Choice for Town becomes:
 - 1) Keep campground fees same but provide no maintenance/upgrade to campsites and buildings.
 - 2) Raise campground fees so can maintain/upgrade camp sites and buildings.
- 6) **Grant \$ Availability** - Town has applied \$100K from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for campground/beach maintenance/upgrade.
- 7) **Individual Campground Sites** discussed the qualitative components of each site i.e. near beach or bathhouse; large vs small; rented by family for a long time, etc. Charlie Bozzello noted that in Doggett family deed Ashland residents did not get a site discount but Selectboard may consider that. P&R will determine who will get sites on a first come-first serve basis.
- 8) **Beach Design/Vision** - John Thomas to present design/vision to Selectboard to stimulate future discussion and measure townspeople's interest in beach as a destination.
- 9) **Other Notes:**
 - Parks and Recreation programs are a great asset and service to local families
 - Establish campsite/beach rules & regulations
 - Consider creating fund for maintenance/upgrade of campground/beach
 - Continue winter camper storage for fee
 - Consider winter boat storage for fee
 - Accessory structures on campsite do not need town permit if not a permanent structure (i.e. decks, sheds)
 - Campground Season 2025 planned

IV. ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Peter Ott proposed to adjourn meeting. Sean Collins

made a motion to adjourn, and Jana seconded. proposed to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

Selectboard Meeting – Monday, January 6th at Utility Conference Room
6 Collins Street at 5:30 pm to discussion campground funding.

Next EDC Committee – Wednesday, January 13th at Utility Conference Room
6 Collins Street at 5:30 pm.