Town of Newington, NH

Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 3rd, 2020 Remote Via Zoom

**Attending Meeting by Zoom**:

Chair Jeff Hiatt, Vice-Chair Mike Donahue, Selectman Chair Ted Connors, Jill Boynton, Bob Raymond, Brandon Arsenault, Alicia Busconi, Economic Development Coordinator Karen Anderson, Consultant Jerry Coogan and Town Administrator Martha Roy.

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

J. Hiatt called the meeting to order at 6pm.

**Minutes Approval: T. Connors moved to approve the minutes of October 29th, 2020 with the M. Donahue change. M. Donahue seconded the motion with all in favor.**

**Update on Fox Run Mall Meeting:**

J. Hiatt and M. Donahue met with Eric Brasier of Spinoso Real Estate Group that manages the Fox Run Mall, and Greg Mikolaities, PE at Cars and Coffee at the Fox Run Mall. It was encouraging because they had gotten local professional advice. Spinosa wanted to know what the time line was for changes. There is no time line currently because nothing has been proposed. J. Hiatt explained that it was very important for the town to maintain their economic base. B. Raymond asked if the whole committee could meet with them. J. Hiatt explained that they have been thinking of having a panel that will meet first and then a forum for the public. B. Arsenault thought that before there is a forum, the committee should get more educated about the possibilities. The best results will be when every works together, the Town and the businesses.

Urstadt Biddle’s property (Newington Park) is going up for sale soon. J. Hiatt asked what incentive packages Newington has to offer? J. Coogan will send J. Hiatt information on the Economic Development Zone in Newington. B. Arsenault thought that it would be a good idea to find out what other towns and cities are offering to make our properties attractive.

Alicia Busconi explained that stores are looking for smaller spaces, even large restaurants are looking to reduce their space to 4,000 square feet. Discussion ensued about the future of restaurants. A. Busconi said that in the next 12-15 months many things will be changing.

**Business Appreciation Effort Update:**

K. Anderson suggested that the committee send out thank you notes to businesses to let them know that this time has been a difficult, but the town appreciates that they are still here.

SubCom just finished an undersea cable from Tahiti to Bora Bora and Samoa, connecting the US, UK and Spain.

Spongejet just refurbished Nubble Light.

Thermofisher ramped up production of plastics in the medical field to help with the fight against Covid.

K. Anderson would like to give these businesses a “pat on the back” for their efforts.

K. Anderson shared her new Business Newsletter. J. Boynton thought it was a great idea and asked how often the Newsletter would go out? It is great to connect businesses to residents. Remind businesses to look at the web page. K. Anderson said that the newsletter would come out every quarter, unless a special issue newsletter would be needed. The newsletter will appear on the left side of the website. K. Anderson mentioned that there is no place in the businesses portal to post articles. M. Roy will look into this.

A subcommittee was established to update the website. Members are K. Anderson, M. Donahue, J. Boynton, G. Coogan and M. Roy. This subcommittee will also figure out how to explain our crime rate compared to other communities our size per the discussion with Captain Sullivan of the Police Department at the last meeting.

**Seacoast Economic Development Joint Advertising:**

An ad in NH Business is $400. Per ad placed with 6 ads (every other month) placed. G. Coogan will send sample joint ads to the committee. The committee thought that it was expensive though there was money left in this year’s budget. ($2,400 for the year). M. Donahue thought that they should get some input from other Economic Development people. G. Coogan said that the Portsmouth Economic Development Program Manager, Nancy Carmer, suggested this. B. Arsenault asked how the committee would be able to measure the expense vs the effectiveness of the articles and said he’d check into the price.

**E-News Communications/Topics:**

M. Donahue thought that it is important to make people aware of home occupations that aren’t in the business zone. Future articles could also focus on medical.

**Mixed Use Educational Webinar:**

The committee would like to have a live question and answer with consultant Mark Fugere.

**Meeting with Planning Board:**

The committee would like to invite the Planning Board to our activities. J. Hiatt will call Planning Board Chair Denis Hebert to discuss getting something on the agenda.

**Mahoney Family Property:**

J. Hiatt will call the Mahoney family about the future uses of their site.

B. Arsenault commented that fiscally 2021 will be a very tough year.

T. Connors said that the utilities in Newington have gone down in value by $140 million dollars.

T. Connors thanked the committee for all their hard work. B. Arsenault thought that they had a great group of people.

**Adjournment:** **T. Connors moved to adjourn at 7:25pm. M. Donahue seconded the motion with all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Roy

Town Administrator