

Town of Newington, NH
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday June 23rd, 2022

Present: Mike Donahue, Bob Raymond, Judy Miamis, Selectmen's Rep Brandon Arsenault, Paul Deschaine and Martha Roy, Town Administrator.

Called to order at 6:04pm.

Minutes Approval: B. Raymond moved to approve the minutes of April 28, 2022. J. Miamis seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Budget Update:

M. Roy pointed out that the only expense to date in the EDC budget in 2022 is the wages line. M. Roy and P. Deschaine are strategizing to keep this expense in line. M. Donahue pointed out that P. Deschaine had increased hours in January because he was working on a huge project, a potential tax incentive, that will benefit the Town and the Board of Selectmen in the future.

Patriots Yearbook Ad for 2022:

P. Deschaine explained that the Business NH ad that the committee had previously voted to do, had not come to fruition. There is a new opportunity to advertise in the Patriots 2022 yearbook. This yearbook will be distributed at all home games to the people in the skyboxes. The ad will cost \$10,000 and hopefully ten seacoast communities will participate, making the cost \$1,000 each. So far seven communities have committed, if no others participate, Newington's share for the ad will be \$1,429. It will be a static ad with no rotation. B. Arsenault thought that this was a creative idea and on budget, so it's worth a try. There was discussion about trying to pay less based on Newington's relative size vs. other cities participating. As soon as P. Deschaine gets a copy of the ad, he will share it with the committee. M. Donahue asked if Newington had officially committed to the ad. P. Deschaine said that no contract has been signed, but have verbally committed. B. Arsenault asked if P. Deschaine could ask if Newington could only contribute \$1,000. **B. Raymond moved to reverse the vote taken at the April meeting to advertise in Business NH and to now advertise in the Patriots 2022 yearbook. J. Miamis seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Retail Sector Update:

M. Donahue explained that Alicia Busconi was unable to attend the meeting today. P. Deschaine said that he believes that she still wants to participate in the future. M. Donahue suggested the committee review Town Planner John Kreb's memo about commercial development in Newington as it relates to retail.

- The hotel on Woodbury Ave. is going forward and will be going before the Planning Board again because their approval had lapsed.
- Sears sold for \$11 million. No one is aware what will be going in there.
- The Crossings at Fox Run sold recently and the new owners are taking steps to subdivide, Long Horn Steakhouse, McDonalds, Aldi's and the movie theater at the mall.
- There is a huge need for small manufacturing/flex spaces for business start-ups and small manufacturing facilities, but very little land available for such purposes. It appears that redevelopment of existing properties is the future of Newington.
- The former Asia restaurant has had a lot of interest for a myriad of uses, but the price for the property seems to be too high for buyers.
- Discussions are happening about the reconstruction of the car dealership on Woodbury, this should happen in 2022.

Report on Conference Call with Taylor Caswell, Commissioner NH Dept of Business and Economic Affairs:

P. Deschaine told the committee that the \$100 million InvestNH program was approved by the Governor and the Executive Council. This money will be used for housing development. Housing is currently not being built due to the increased costs. This \$100 million will help with that.

Report on Seacoast Economic Development Stakeholders (SEDS) Roundtable:

The concerns that the group discussed were housing for their workforce, affordable childcare and adult care, childcare and adult care for all shifts, energy costs, lack of mental health infrastructure.

October 2021 Business Event Survey:

The committee discussed the results of the survey taken at the October business event. Discussion ensued about updating the business portal and including a list of available properties in Newington. M. Donahue said that businesses would like functions that local chambers of commerce usually put on. P. Deschaine said that Newmarket has its business group. M. Donahue said that North Hampton has a business association. They provide a catalyst to bring people together. One business mentioned that they had space where an event could take place. M. Donahue would like to follow up with businesses about their answers in the survey and ask what they want. The survey is telling us that there is a need for a contact list or a way to interact with other businesses. J. Miamis suggested having an event in the fall, that would include food trucks, so people could pay for their own food, but still get together. Some event is needed that the Town's organizes, but does not fund.

BOEM Task Force and Off Shore Wind Development:

M. Donahue said that the University of Maine is working on the floating turbine technology that is required for the depth of the Gulf of Maine. The Bureau of Energy Management (BOEM) will be awarding leases in federal waters in the fourth quarter of 2024. It is different than anything currently off the east coast. This project has recently become very favorable because of the high energy costs for fossil fueled generation. They are looking for deep water ports for the project. Newington isn't a good candidate for building the turbines because the turbines are brought out vertically and the bridges wouldn't accommodate that. However, Newington could be a good candidate for a maintenance facility to repair and maintain these turbines and perhaps for transmission facilities for onshoring the power to the grid. M. Donahue will write a memo to update the Board of Selectmen on the project. These turbines should not be visible from the NH shore.

Recruiting New Members:

M. Roy said that the committee is down by two members. B. Arsenault suggested putting it in the next newsletter and on the sign out front.

Election of Officers:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

The next meeting will be August 25th, 2022 at 6pm.

Adjournment: M. Donahue moved to adjourn at 7:43pm. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder