



Town of Fairhaven

Department of Planning and Economic Development

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Fairhaven Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Thursday, January 21, 2021 - 6:30p.m.

2021 MAY -6 P 12:19

FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

1. **Quorum & Attendance: Present:** Chairperson, Kevin McLaughlin, Cathy Melanson, Jessica Fidalgo, Robert Espindola

Absent: Bernard Roderiques, Todd MacGregor and Ed Lopez

Mr. Paul Foley, Director of Planning and Economic Development was present.

2. Review and Approve minutes of December 15, 2020 Meeting - There was not a sufficient quorum to vote on these minutes, will postpone until the next meeting.
3. Goals of Economic Development - Mr. McLaughlin says he keeps this on the agenda so committee members are aware of what the goals of the EDC are.
4. Review of Marine Resources Committee draft regulations - Mr. McLaughlin stated he wasn't finished reviewing the draft regulations but promises to have them to the committee members for the next meeting.

Mr. Espindola stated this subject is on the agenda for the Select Board meeting Monday evening. He advised that the information of the Marine Resource Draft should be on the agenda as of Friday evening for the Select Board meeting for Monday.

5. Town Fees - Mr. McLaughlin stated he thought there was a "grace" period for homeowners to pay the real estate taxes. He referenced the seating capacity for restaurants at 25% and that restaurants are certainly hurting. He wonders what can be done to adjust the fees and/or a grace period to pay their taxes.

Ms. Melanson said that most of the fees from the Town are already paid at this point. She said in order to get the liquor license renewals it has to be paid at the end of the year, so they've already done that.

Mr. McLaughlin thought out loud whether perhaps a "good faith" effort could be done for next year's renewals. He wondered if it's a small amount of money, why it can't be considered.

Mr. Espindola stated that at the recent Board of Health meetings there was a discussion about reducing or eliminating the restaurant fees that were due. He said they also voted to reduce fees on livestock. Mr. Espindola stated when Mr. Rees was here they withdrew half a million dollars to balance the budget last year and had an unexpected \$1.3 million taken out from free cash. He said it was a unique year. Mr. Espindola said now would be the time to suggest something as it is budget season for the Town..

Mr. Espindola stated this couldn't be a suggestion for a few weeks, as the Select Board agenda has already been posted.

Discussion on what fees and changes can or are made through the Board of Health. Discussion on special provisions through the Finance Committee.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if a directive from the Select Board could request a business in Town get a 'break' on some of the Town's required fees. He asked how they could reach out to Businesses in Fairhaven to help them.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that one of EDC's goals was to help the business community feel good about being in Fairhaven.

Mr. Espindola stated that perhaps they make a request to the Interim Town Administrator (TA) or oncoming TA to assist small business in some relief of fees that they pay the Town.

Cathy Melanson made a motion to suggest to the Select Board and Interim Town Administrator to implement and/or explore some sort of Business relief plan for businesses that have been impacted by the Coronavirus and it was seconded by Jessica Fidalgo.

Mr. Espindola stated that he would talk to the Select Board about the idea and he would approve the idea of a study being done to find out what could happen. Ms. Fidalgo stated she had been out of work for two months last year and the little grace period that was given made a huge difference as a taxpayer.

Ms. Melanson suggested perhaps speaking to the Town of Acushnet, as they did give some sort of relief to business owners on a fee of some sort.

Mr. McLaughlin stated he would offer to attend and put together an outline of what the EDC is asking for.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. Rt. 6/240/Opportunity Zone Redevelopment Study Town Planner Update

Mr. Foley reviewed the Rt.6/240 Target area redevelopment study. He stated he applied in October for the Site Readiness program, administered by MassDevelopment. They assign experts that they work with for pre-development assistance including environmental due diligence and investigating site constraints as an essential part of our overall Rt.6/240 redevelopment study target area.

He's been leaning toward developing a 40R, smart growth zoning overlay district for the area south of Bridge Street. Mr. Foley reviewed this overlay district act with the committee members. It would establish special zoning overlay districts that for high-density mixed-use zoning with apartments above retail. It encourages communities to create dense residential or mixed use smart growth zoning districts, including a certain percentage of affordable housing units to be located near transit stations, in areas of concentrated development such as existing town centers and other

highly suitable locations. Must require that 20% of the district be affordable homes, and it should allow for mixed use.

Mr. McLaughlin asked what constitutes as an 'affordable home.'

Mr. Foley stated there was a formula whereby if a person earning 80% of the average annual income can expend 30% of their income. Mr. Foley further explained the 40R.

Mr. Espindola asked if the "R" meant anything in 40, any extinction? Mr. Foley said it's just where it falls as a section within Chapter 40 but doesn't believe it stands for residential though the State is trying to encourage more housing. Discussion ensued about where they could look at units and 40R overlay in the Town.

7. Any other business reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the posting of this meeting.
8. Next Meeting February 18, 2021

Cathy Melanson made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Jessica Fidalgo. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Espindola and Ms. Melanson welcomed Ms. Fidalgo to the Economic Development Committee.

Respectively,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary