

Economic Development Committee (EDC)
July 21, 2016
Town Hall Banquet Room

1. Quorum/Attendance:

Mr. McLaughlin opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Present: Chairman, Kevin McLaughlin, Wayne Hayward, Dan Freitas, Todd MacGregor (arrived at 8:08pm), Mark Rees, William Roth and John Seed.

2. Approve Minutes of June 2, 2016

Wayne Hayward made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by John Seed. The motion passed 5-0; with Dan Freitas abstaining whereas he was not present for that meeting.

3. Review Selectmen's Actions of EDC request:

Mark Rees explained his memorandum within the packet of information. He pointed out the three recommendations that the Committee put together at their last meeting. He said that the Selectmen would appoint any ex-officio, non-voting members, as they do with other committees.

4. Discuss List of Task & Goals:

Bill Roth discussed the list he put together from the previous meeting on what the Committee may want to focus on to create tasks and goals.

Kevin McLaughlin asked about prioritizing the list.

Mark Rees suggested taking the Portland, ME Economic Development Plan (EDP) discussion out of order as to give everyone an idea how they proceeded with breaking down the tasks and goals. He then went on to say that the Committee should focus on a few areas and from that list put a work plan together. Mr. Rees reviewed and discussed the Portland EDP. He explained they chose one sector and a focus in that area, for example how to better support business in Fairhaven, and then the focus could be the permit process. Can we put steps together to make it easier. He then explained that progress was measured on the specific areas. He asked the members to think about what are 3 primary areas? Categories? Then to prioritize them.

The Committee discussed three to four generalized areas:

1. Grow Businesses
2. Tourism
3. Waterfront Development
4. Support Existing Businesses

And then they took the list from previous meeting minutes and put them under each "area".

Mark Rees said that he and Bill Roth would put a draft together of the four different categories and suggestions underneath.

Wayne Hayward said that a lot of things on the list have already been looked at; and he would like to see a draft document online something to tie in with the Master Plan.

Kevin McLaughlin said he would like to focus on two things, perhaps just growing businesses & supporting businesses; whereas tourism & waterfront development are to specific areas and he felt that

the Committee was there to support all businesses in Town. He didn't want it to be perceived they only were focusing on two specific business fields, he wanted it more generalized.

Wayne Hayward asked what can government really do?

Bill Roth stated that he felt the question was, how can the EDC support businesses?

Dan Freitas said that he would start with successful businesses in Town and perhaps put them somewhere online, where that could attract other businesses to support each other. "Spring off from one business to another," he said.

Wayne Hayward said that would be between private businesses, again he asked what a local government agency can do, in the big picture, to assist businesses.

Mark Rees used the example of the permit process.

A discussion ensued on perhaps Fairhaven needing a 'roadmap' of the permit process. Wayne Hayward said that he would suggest a flow chart, something simple to read. He said that there was a perception in the Town that there is a problem with permit processing and he feels there isn't.

Dan Freitas stated that Wareham was very successful with business growth and that Fairhaven needs to direct business growth within all of Fairhaven businesses.

There was some discussion on open, vacant industrial land available in Fairhaven.

Bill Roth suggested looking at current vacant land near zoned businesses and industrial, and any adjacent vacant lands that could potentially be rezoned. He said it would be a good exercise for the committee to look at.

Discussion ensued.

Dan Freitas used an example if a developer wanted to come in and make a strip mall of sorts, how friendly does the Town of Fairhaven look to that developer?

Wayne Hayward said that he believed that Fairhaven looks like a business friendly environment. He said the zoning is already in place for a developer.

Mr. Freitas said that the Town should be "selling ourselves", looking for a purchaser and asked how they go about doing that.

Mr. McLaughlin said that he would like to again make a plan more generalized to promote business growth. He said that if a new business came into Town and spoke to other businesses in Town he wasn't sure they would say that Fairhaven is a business friendly Town.

Mr. McLaughlin said that they should be looking at what services do businesses need from the Town? He made reference to his tax bill increasing 100% for his business in the last 6-7 years.

Mr. McLaughlin said they should look at a statement, and come up with a plan.

Wayne Hayward said, "Let's not produce a myth." He said there is no way to have a step by step plan for some things; it's just not that simple.

Bill Roth said that they could look at having a development guide book and that he has already begun drafting one in past years but the project never went anywhere.

Mr. Hayward said he didn't think they should put it out there that it is so hard to be a business in Fairhaven.

Mr. Rees reiterated what the mission of the Committee was; to focus on economic growth.

More discussion ensued.

Mr. McLaughlin said he wanted to look at this like a document for everyone.

5. Discuss Northeastern University EDSAT Program

Mr. Rees brought everyone's attention to NU's EDSAT program, says that it doesn't cost much (approximately \$4500), and they would have to wait until next fiscal year to participate. Mr. Rees asked everyone to review the program and they would discuss at their next meeting and vote on whether or not it was something they wanted to pursue.

Mr. Rees asked Bill Roth to reach out to SRPEDD to come and talk about economic growth for their next meeting.

Mr. Rees went over the agenda for the next meeting:

1. A rough outline for an EDP
2. Northeastern University EDSAT – Potential Article for funding in next Fiscal year.
3. SRPEDD to discuss their economic development plan

The next meeting was scheduled for September 22, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

Kevin McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dan Freitas. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary