

Town of Farmington
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 25, 2023
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Committee Members Present:

Danielle Harris, Chairman
Taylor Crawford, Vice Chairman
Stephen Henry, Planning Board Rep
Ann Titus, Selectmen's Rep

Committee Members Absent:

Dan Woodman, excused
Adam Giles
Jason Lauze
KJ Cardinal, excused

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3).Review of Minutes:

April 11, 2023- Public Meeting Minutes-No minutes were received.

Motion: (Henry, second Titus) to table the minutes passed 4-0.

4).Adopt-a-Spot Update:

Mrs. Harris asked if the members had a chance to take a look at the pre-reads and apologized for not having print outs from the Town available for tonight.

Mrs. Titus asked if the EDC has a spot.

Mrs. Harris said for a spot they would need volunteers to help take care of it and she wasn't sure that they have that. She said they do have the budget they reviewed back before she submitted it and they do have a budgeted item to make a donation. She asked for a motion to allow the funds that they previously agreed upon to be shared with the Parks & Rec. Dept. to sponsor a spot and they had a total of \$300.

Mr. Henry said he knew the Rec. Dept. was taking over the program but he thought that money was for signage.

Mrs. Harris said the Rec. Dept. has a full program for it so the funds would be there to help support the program that they had allotted for it.

Mrs. Titus asked if the funds would be used to support the Rec. Dept. for the Adopt-a-Spot program or for the EDC's Adopt-a-Spot. She then asked if it would be used to help the Rec. Dept. buy flowers for other spots.

Mrs. Harris said they do have a list of the adopted spots so the funds would be used for purchasing materials for a spot and if they would like they can select a specific spots. She said in

the past they had one at the spot in front of the old fire station and they had 3 entities reach out that have selected spots and she believes that one is still available but the funds would be to purchase materials.

She said in the budget they had a few items listed specific types of perennials and things of that nature to cover those costs for it.

Mr. Henry asked if she is basically looking for them to release their claim on that money so the Rec. Dept. can use it.

Mrs. Harris said yes so it could be specifically used to purchase perennial materials for a spot.

Mrs. Titus suggested giving them a gift card from Home Depot or Cameron's to go and buy flowers.

Mr. Henry said they're budget lines for the Town and they are just going to move it from one line to the other.

Mr. Crawford asked if the spotlight would identify that the EDC donated that spot.

Mrs. Harris said yes and she would make sure that is coordinated through Mrs. Rogers. She said she met with her briefly after their last meeting and they are doing a great job organizing it.

She said if they would be more comfortable that the funds that were allotted in that budget if they would prefer for that to go through a specific gift card they could do that as well.

Mr. Henry said auditors don't like gift cards.

Motion: (Henry, second Titus) that we give up \$299 from our budget to the Rec. Dept. so they may use it for their Adopt-a-Spot Program;

Discussion: Mrs. Titus questioned giving them \$299 for flowers and that she was thinking \$200.

Mr. Henry said they have a \$300 line and he was leaving \$1 in the line so it would still be active.

Mrs. Harris pulled up their budget on her phone and said there was \$264.91 in that line specifically itemizing the materials.

Mr. Henry asked if the line says Adopt-a-Spot or EDC.

Mrs. Harris said it's the EDC budget and it says Adopt-a-Spot. She said she could be a volunteer and ensure those perennials get in the ground and that anyone else is welcome to join her.

Mr. Crawford said he and his fiancé would like to be part of it too.

Amendment: by Mr. Henry: to change the amount to \$263.

He said he wanted to keep \$1 in that line because if it goes to \$0 then the EDC can't spend any money.

Mrs. Titus said she didn't agree with going with more because she just bought some flowers and she did the Adopt-a-Spot for the Woman's Club last year and she probably spent \$120. She said she would be willing to go to \$200 for flowers and then 2-3 of them would plant and maintain it. She said \$200 is a reasonable price unless they are buying a tree.

Mrs. Harris asked about mulch and some items that she thought were included in the cost.

Mr. Henry said this is not his area of expertise and that he understood the budget side of it but he didn't know how much flowers cost.

Mrs. Harris asked if they saw the guide that is in there and noted that she partnered with Mrs. Rogers and that is something that the EDC helped create. That is an educational guide for sponsors and business owners to help empower them to make good budget decisions where those perennials they can see year after year. So that's what these funds would be used for and it would be something that you could get a lot of bang for your buck she said.

Amendment: by Mrs. Titus: to amend the amount to \$250.

Mr. Henry accepted the amendment to the motion.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Crawford asked if there is a source where those flowers would come from.

Mrs. Harris said there are places in town that have been identified and they were spotlighted in this quarter's newsletter.

Mr. Crawford asked if they could put preferential to a local business vs. a Home Depot.

Mrs. Harris said sure and she would note that those funds are to be used at a local business.

She asked if the members had a chance to see the Adopt-a-Spot information in the newsletter and if they had any questions or feedback on it.

Mrs. Titus said it was a nice newsletter.

Mrs. Harris then asked for a motion to approve the printing and costs as budgeted.

Motion: (Henry, second Titus) to approve the newsletter for this month passed 4-0.

Mrs. Harris said at the next meeting she would be looking for feedback on the plant guide and if there is anything else that would be useful for business owners to help them engage.

She said if they need to do a potential edition with the Request for Proposals (for the old fire station) that is now live and that is the only thing that was not in the newsletter as it is recent news. She said all the input from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission was included in the RFP and there haven't been any submissions yet and that may be a helpful addition to the newsletter. We could squeeze that in with a link to the RFP on the Town website she said.

Consensus of the members was to include an update on the RFP in the newsletter.

5). Walden Renewables:

Mrs. Harris said there was a letter to the committee from Walden Renewables stating that a representative would be coming to their next meeting and that would be an opportunity to share for informational purposes only and present the work they are considering being done and for the committee to ask questions and for the public attend and ask any questions.

Mr. Crawford said in the letter it said there a hearing on the 18th and asked if they had any news from that.

Mrs. Harris said she hasn't heard anything from that and asked Mrs. Titus if she has heard anything.

Mrs. Titus said there is a MOU going back and forth right now.

Mr. Crawford asked if there were any hearings scheduled between now and their next meeting because things could happen in 4 weeks and they don't know what the difference might be

between today and then.

Mrs. Titus said they should invite them because they may have more information and she would also invite Town Administrator Ken Dickie in case there are any issues that he can clarify for the committee and keep everybody on the right track and in the right direction.

Mrs. Harris she would invite Mr. Dickie and asked the members if they wanted to create a list of questions to ask at the presentation or go off of when they hear the presentation.

Mr. Crawford said if they have a drawing or illustration so they know what it looks like because they could describe it one way and it could end up looking a different way.

Mrs. Titus said if he does a presentation we have a screen and to tell him he do any kind of a presentation he needs to do. She said they would allot the time for him and whatever he needs.

Mrs. Harris said on Thursdays there may not be a lot of folks in the office and asked if anyone has the IT support that might be able to help.

Mr. Henry asked if there was a projector in here and he didn't know where it is if there is one.

Mrs. Titus said it has been used at Selectmen's meetings and to e-mail Mr. Dickie and tell him they would like to have the projector available for that meeting.

Mrs. Harris she would e-mail Mr. Dickie to make sure they have all the equipment needed here.

She said she would ask the Walden rep to bring easel visuals just in case and that way they can project for viewers and she will connect with Mr. Dickie to make they have that as option if they would like to do that.

6). Tax Increment Financing District:

Mrs. Harris said she connected with the SRPC and currently there is HOP grant application so she went to the Housing Opportunity Planning site where they have a grant that is being reviewed for the TIF District that is part of a larger grant proposal in partnership with NH Housing. She said they are waiting to hear back and there will be a steering committee in the next couple of weeks and the SRPC is planning that.

She said they sent her an update and read that the grant would cover a consultant to review the Town's current Rt. 11 TIF District development program and the finance and revenue plan. This would re-establish the TIF Advisory Board and it would confirm the primary objectives, review existing boundaries, review the land use and regulatory mechanisms and focus on the zoning, overlay districts and site plan and architectural standards. She said she had some links to the zoning and architectural standards she could send the committee.

She said in addition this will update assessed values, address compliance or legal issues and update the estimated capital costs to sewer to Rt. 11, research funding sources and improve implementation process to ensure it's a success. Hopefully we'll hear by next meeting she said.

Mrs. Harris asked Mr. Henry if they had any updates on this on the Planning Board side.

Mr. Henry said not on the TIF stuff.

7). Chaos & Kindness Update:

Mrs. Harris said this was discussed at the Selectmen's meeting on Monday and asked if there was an update on the event.

Mrs. Titus said all they know at this moment is they are coming on June 1.

Mrs. Henry said he believes the show will be at the high school.

Mrs. Titus said it will probably be at the Henry Wilson Memorial School because they heard something is going on at the high school that day but she didn't know if they are switching anything around.

Mrs. Harris asked if a time was selected and for the capacity at HWMS.

Mrs. Titus repeated all they know is June 1 and there is a person named Wendy that that committee is reaching out to but they have been playing phone tag so they really haven't consulted with her. She said she hoped this board could volunteer to help out or do a write-up for them. Whatever happens we're going to have to move fast and e-mails could out to all the committees and the people on this committee and then meet together and do what we have to do she said.

She said she was sure the Police and Fire Depts. are putting things in place even though they just know the date for safety. She said she didn't know if people need to be in the halls (at the school), directing traffic, selling T-shirts, etc. or if they plan to ask the committee chairmen about what they do or about Farmington. She said there's a venue and they're coming and that's all they know so it's going to be a surprise. Maybe they want it to be that way so we're honest and open and not over thinking it which is fine too because we're a pretty cool community and we'll tell you the way it is and we're open and honest and good people. I think they will see how much pride we have in our town when they're here she said.

Mr. Crawford asked if it was just going to be a single location and on Face book it sounded like they wanted to go to businesses and highlight them for their video and if there was going to be any coordination there but it sounds like we don't know yet.

Mrs. Harris said it sounded like they were looking for nominations.

Mrs. Titus said we have an excellent committee and named Kathy Seaver, Jim Horgan, Ken Dickie and Erica Rogers as some of the members and that there are a bunch of other people that are involved in this community. She said when they find out what they really want they'll call people. When we find out what they are looking for we can call the businesses and tell them. Ken Dickie is very organized and very professional so whatever he has to do he'll get it done she said.

Mr. Henry said it's worth noting that the name of the tour is Chaos & Kindness so chaos is part of it.

Mrs. Harris said if folks haven't yet to send in nominations and she didn't know if they would send those nominations in as a committee as it sounds like they are taking nominations from the entire community. She said they are looking for a cause and individual businesses to visit

and asked if they would consider revamping the Adopt-a-Spot Program as a cause and individually e-mail that in. She said it has been discussed in the past and any way they can promote the downtown revitalization like they did in the winter newsletter with the RSA 79-E grant and highlighting Mr. Lauze's project and what the businesses there have done to revitalize that might be some nice ones to nominate.

Mrs. Titus asked if any surveys have out in the last few years asking the businesses what they need from us and they might be looking for the EDC to help them with. She said the newsletter has a lot of information and suggested asking them what they are looking for. They are welcome to come to this meeting but some businesses work at night and some close at a certain hour so it is hard to come here. If they want to shoot you an e-mail asking to bring something up or saying this is something they're having an issue with and they might need extra help she said.

Mrs. Harris said they included that in the business directory e-mail and they haven't heard much feedback from that. She said she thought it was great asking more if there's anything they can do to help businesses or information they're looking for.

Mrs. Titus said she believes in face-to-face so when she gets the newsletters she will go in and drop a couple off and ask if everything is okay and what they can do for them. She said if there is something they can help them through or guide them in the right direction for a loan or anything we'll do that. We can help them find that information and ask if there is anything she could bring back to the committee she said.

Mrs. Harris said she hasn't gotten any feedback on that. She said they will hear more on this on the show coming one week from today.

8).Other Business before the Committee:

Available Commercial Space-Mrs. Harris said folks have been reaching out to businesses regarding open commercial spaces in town and asked if anyone has any spare time to reach out to a handful of businesses to see if we have any open commercial spaces in town. She said at one point Mr. Henry was looking at a list of all open spaces and asked him if there was a way to search all commercial spaces online.

Mr. Henry said he talked about putting a spot on the Town website where people with property could list what they have. He said he was not sure what they want to do there or how much commercial space was available. He said he didn't think there was much because the Kodiak building is not ready yet.

Mrs. Harris said there is just a handful and maybe not that many. She said Honey Dew is a big one and she reached out to some people to see if they could get anyone to grab that space. She asked if Mr. Henry knew anything about the location next to Rite Aid which was a liquor store.

Mr. Henry said there are signs in the windows so it's being marketed.

Mrs. Harris said its come up in the past about getting more coverage for local businesses and

she has been forwarding copies of the newsletter to WMUR, NH Magazine, NH Chronicle and Yankee Magazine. She asked if there was anything else the committee could think of just continuing to promote businesses in town and see if they can get covered in those.

Mrs. Titus asked when they pick a business if she calls them and asks them what they want to highlight.

Mrs. Harris said she connected with a couple of business owners so some of them she has but there's more.

Mrs. Titus asked if they contacted her to highlight their business or if she is picking the businesses to highlight.

Mrs. Harris said she has been reaching out to business owners and to potential news outlets.

Mrs. Titus said she could ask what they want them to highlight and they may have something coming up.

Mrs. Harris said some had events coming up so it's worked out but some with the timing of the potential coverage some of it's just been generally on the business and the season when they're most active like we have a lot of farms and things like that.

Business Directory-She said regarding the business directory with everything else going on she was looking to see if there was a volunteer that might want to take the lead on coordinating with the Town Office as she has run into some roadblocks with that.

Mr. Crawford asked with they need to coordinate with the Town.

Mrs. Harris said the list that they have access to that Mr. Cardinal set up, right now they need the Town Office to remove what they originally removed from that list that they all worked on together to remove items. She said the Town could start with removing those businesses and then as a secondary the business that filled out the submission form making sure all that information is accurate. She said they could continue to send out that e-mail and she is happy to do that and see if more people want to fill out that submission form.

Mr. Henry asked about the roadblocks she mentioned.

Mrs. Harris said there are a lot of other things going on and she was working with them but she needs some help with that.

Mrs. Titus asked if they could divide up the list and have everybody take so many.

Mrs. Harris said they have done that and they condensed the list and the businesses have been in the process of updating any new information and now they are at the point of working with the Town to make sure those updates happen. She said right now the first one would be removing businesses that are no longer active from the site and there are still a handful of those and even that would be a first step.

Mr. Henry said that may be something that they lean on their Selectmen's Rep to help with getting the website updated.

Mrs. Titus asked who has the list.

Mrs. Harris said they could connect offline and it has been a coordination with some of the

administrative support.

Mrs. Titus said they used to have the Welfare Director send out the e-mails to the newsletters and the ones she got back that the e-mails weren't there anymore or they were out of business she took them off the list. She said somebody must have this somewhere in their computer and if she does that and she gets a print out back she could bring that print out here. She said there has to be an easier way to do this and asked who they got the list from.

Mrs. Harris said the committee compiled the original list.

Mr. Henry said somebody has access to the list to update it.

Mrs. Titus said she would come in here tomorrow and get the list and she could start sending out some but if she can't get through all of them...

Mr. Henry said it sounds like they have the information and they need somebody to do the updates on the website.

Mrs. Harris said it will take some coordination with them.

Mrs. Titus said she didn't think they could change it on the website and they have to give that information to the tech guy or to the Selectmen's Secretary. She then asked what they needed from her.

Mrs. Harris said they need to secure a staff member that will support it and has access to updating the list.

Mr. Crawford said they have the updates they just need to get them updated on the website.

Mr. Henry said they need to know who is in charge of maintaining the Town website, if that person would support doing the updates for the EDC and are the Selectmen comfortable with that if the person says no.

Mrs. Harris said at the meeting when Kyle Pimental had come and there were only a few people here they discussed some potential legal issues ensuring that the Town isn't promoting businesses personally and there may need to be a sentence saying none of these businesses are personally promoted by the Town.

Mrs. Titus asked if the list is still on the website.

Mrs. Harris said there is still a list on the website and based on the review they went through as a committee months ago, there are businesses on there that are no longer active.

Mr. Henry said they may have to list the criteria for being on the list that simply exists in Farmington. It's not an endorsement it's simply a directory of businesses that list Farmington as their address he said.

Mr. Crawford said there was a recommended text that Mr. Pimental said the legal team said they wanted to add on the page like a disclaimer.

Mrs. Harris said they could ask Mr. Pimental to send them what that exact sentence would be. She said they also have an electronic business form that can be posted on the website so going forward it's sort of an evergreen solution where any business that comes to town can go on the website and fill out the form. She said they need the form posted on the website and then it

goes to their live list after it gets updated.

Mr. Henry said somebody will have to maintain that list as new stuff comes in on the form.

Mrs. Harris said that is why they need that key contact.

Mrs. Titus said she was going to e-mail Mr. Dickie to see if there is an employee who can update the list periodically, put the new business form on there and if they get it to send it to them. I'll see what I can do for you she said.

Mrs. Harris said they are supporting but they don't want to take full ownership of it as a committee because it's not a long term solution.

Mr. Henry said he doubts they give them the authority to do that not being employees.

Mrs. Harris said as she understood it this goes under Code Enforcement and they were trying to make that clear that any coding regulations should go through the Town Office not come back to them.

Mrs. Titus said all it is, is a directory listing the businesses in town. She said would ask Mr. Dickie if there is somebody on staff that could periodically update the list. She said she didn't think they would do it every week but maybe they could do it every 3-6 months and she would see what Mr. Dickie has to say and then come back to the committee with some information or e-mail it to Mrs. Harris.

Mr. Henry said if they need help from somebody that knows how to set up a website he can come in and help whoever may need help figuring it out. If there is nobody that knows how I'm willing to help because I know how the back ends of websites work he said.

Group E-Mail Account-Mrs. Harris asked if anyone got an e-mail from the Town's IT Dept. about trying to set up a group e-mail account.

The members said they did not receive that e-mail.

Mrs. Harris said she did receive it and she tried to click on the link and it's still not working. She said they have been trying to set up a group e-mail account and if they do get one that is what that's regarding and they can see if that link works for them.

Mr. Henry asked if she talked to somebody from the Town so she knows that is officially happening.

Mrs. Harris said yes and that they met a couple of months ago and then someone circled back and she knew that it was on-going.

Dog Park?- She asked Mr. Henry if he has heard anything about a dog park coming to town and she has been hearing things about dog parks bringing more folks and more spending into town. She asked if that would be something hard to get approved.

Mr. Henry said he didn't know where that would fall under zoning and he was not sure what private entity would be creating and funding a dog park which is what would make it come before the Planning Board. We have 100's of acres of conservation land where you can walk your dog he said.

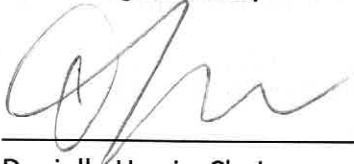
9). Next Meeting: Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 6 p.m.

10). Adjournment:

Motion: (Titus, second Henry) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:47 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Danielle Harris', written over a horizontal line.

Danielle Harris, Chairman