

## Economic Development Committee

Nov. 5, 2020

**Present:** Ron Rzasa (Chair), Fran Shippee (BOS Representative), Julianna Dodson, John Pieper, Faith Mba, Robert Korb

**Guests:** Jeff Scott, Tony & Jen Barton

**Meeting called to order: 5:00 PM via Zoom**

*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, etc.*

**Presiding:** Ron Rzasa

**Secretary Report:**

**Minutes from October 22nd Field Trip to 1453 NH-9, Spofford**

John 1st and Fran 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve the minutes with spelling correction – approved unanimously

**Minutes from October 22nd Zoom meeting**

John 1<sup>st</sup> and Julianna 2<sup>nd</sup> – minutes approved unanimously as written

**Old Business**

1. **Welcome Package:** The Welcome packages have been sent out to all the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter new owners. There is a delay in the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter lists because of complications in the town's computer software update. The package is on-line, so it is available to anyone who is interested.
2. **EDC Role Helping Businesses (Business Listings):** Fran, Jeff Scott, Marion, and Ron Rzasa have gone through the "not called" combined business listings A – M. They have deleted the duplicates, those with no contact information, and those they knew from general knowledge did not exist anymore. They will continue the process M – Z on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>. Jeff, Ron, and Julianna will attempt to contact those. Because not all the business' functions were noted, there is concern about cataloging them on the listings.
  - a. Presently the business listings are still posted on the town website. However, now to access them, the client is directed through the EDC website and thus making them aware of the site. Once EDC hosts the listings, a new search engine would be created that would cover multiple functions of a business.
  - b. Establishing hosting and reformatting the listings on the EDC website will require professional assistance. Once the spreadsheet is completed, Antje Hornbeck can be contacted to get a pricing on this backend development. Because this may be costly, Fran will contact Antje to get a basic quote so the committee can determine how to proceed with the funding.
3. **Enchanted Café:** Because of time constraints, the business is looking elsewhere.
4. **Thomas Property:** The property is zoned residential. The business on it was grandfathered. John has investigated the new owner's options. He sent out the procedure and timeline in requesting a zoning change to commercial. This can only be completed once a year at the town meeting. Thus, the timeline is especially important. Another possible solution is the owner seek a "non-conforming use change" noted in RSA 500-502. However, this would be only temporary. Faith will forward all this information to the new owner and see if he would like to talk to John directly. Once again, although the EDC is happy to guide a business along, it was highly recommended that an owner seek professional help. An optional use would be Senior Housing. The EDC touring the property made a good impression on the owner and helped deflect the notion that Chesterfield is unfriendly to businesses.

5. **Copper Cannon:** Still no word from the owner.
6. **Signage Petition:** John looked deeper into the process. There are two avenues to changing zoning regulations. The Planning Board proposing it, as in the Thomas Property. This results in it being put on the town ballot for the March election. A Citizen Petition can also go before the Planning Board. But whether it is approved or disapproved by that board, it is placed as a warrant article and voted on at the Town Meeting. Thus, the title of the petition has been changed to request it become a warrant article. As per the last meeting, wording has been included that limits the hosting property to one sign in addition to their own. After some discussion about number of signs and footage, John motioned to accept petition "as worded as a Warrant Article". Ron seconded and the vote passed unanimously. Now, the petition is good to go. It will require 25 signatures.
7. **Update on Business Questions:** The script was submitted to the committee for review a couple of weeks ago and accepted. Ron and Todd are waiting for the initial round of calls to be completed. Unfortunately, this has been much more complicated than first thought. Once the first round is completed, it will be decided which businesses to contact with the full 10-minute interview. Todd's contribution and mentoring are greatly appreciated.
8. **Letter to other Town Committees:** Julianna completed the memo and sent it to the committee. The committee approved its wording. Fran will distribute it.
9. **EDC Website Update:** It was suggested that updating include deletion of repetitions between sections which would make it more concise. Links could be added to pages on the town website that would hopefully provide up-to-date information on forms etc. Any major website update will require a lot of planning and more content than what the EDC currently has. Presently, it is better to make it more relative, updated, and useful. Julianna will review it.
10. **Senior Housing:** Now that the election is over, Ron will contact State Senator Jay Kahn to see how the state can help the town with Senior Housing. The acreage adjacent to Poor Road could be a good location.

#### **New Business**

1. **Fiscal Year:** The end of the fiscal year is Dec. 31. Any money used after that is considered unapproved until the town meeting. There is still money left from this year's budget. Because Julianna is maintaining the website, it was decided that she could purchase resource materials on website maintenance and development that would help with this work.
2. **Virtual Business Event:** There may still be time to have one virtual working event by the end of the year. Julianna has a lot of ideas about how to run it. She will network to see if anyone would help create the event. Incentive items would be good to increase attendance.
3. **Marsh House:** The latest deal fell through. So technically, the responsibility of finding a buyer for the property falls back to the EDC. It is requested that the EDC come up with a creative plan and present it to the BOS. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting Date**  
**Thursday, Nov. 19th**  
**5:00PM - Via Zoom**

Meeting Adjourned at 6:22PM  
Respectfully Submitted by,  
Donna Roscoe, Secretary  
November 6, 2020