

Economic Development Committee

Nov. 19, 2020 - Final

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

Guests: Jeff Scott, Kate Chase, Barbara Girs

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

Marsh House presentation: Jeff Scott & Barbara Girs

A brief history of the 1840 building was given. After the new town office building was constructed, the building was abandoned. It is called the Marsh house because at one point it was associated with Benjamin Marsh who was one of the founders of Jordan Marsh Department store. A group painted the exterior in 2008, but the interior was not touched. At a town meeting it was decided to try and sell it for \$1 instead of spending \$30,000 for demolition. The building's unique architectural design and location makes it worth saving. A group cleaned up the interior and held an open house that attracted 60 people. Eventually there were two purchase attempts, but both fell through. A group of concerned citizens joined the NH Preservation Alliance for guidance in preserving the building. Now they are forming a non-profit to preserve and renovate the building which will cost about \$250,000. In 2018, the BOS were able to secure a zoning variance that would allow for commercial use of the building. The goal is to create office space upstairs, and a café and retail space downstairs. The rent would cover the operating costs. It does not come with the land which lowers the property taxes. There is community support for saving and preserving the building. The non-profit needs funds to cover the application fees, preservation, and renovations. They believe that investors could be found within the town of Chesterfield. These investors would not be looking for a profit but an investment in the community. The non-profit is looking to the EDC to help come up with a plan and present it to the BOS. The EDC should consider a field trip to the building. Ron will send out an e-mail about possible tour dates.

Secretary Report:

Minutes from Nov 5th

John 1st and Fran 2nd to approve the minutes – Ron, Fran, Julianna, John, and Faith approved
Rob abstained because due to an e-mail issue, he did not receive the minutes.

Old Business

1. **Welcome Package:** The latest listings have been forward to Julianna. At the committee's request, she has stocked up on the package material. The packages will go out after Thanksgiving.
2. **EDC Role Helping Businesses (Business Listings):** After many weeks of paring down the list, Fran will finish up with the updated business directory spread sheet sometime this week. Then, she will give it to Antje to load on the website. Antje should also put the listings into a group heading so we can bulk mail them out from the EDC e-mail. This will enable us to conduct an annual audit to check if they still

exist. Also, to update them on business to business meetings and other pertinent information. Unfortunately, not all businesses have an e-mail address.

- a. We should also send out a notice for them to check the accuracy of their listing. Is it the right heading and if they approve of the wording? Also, this would be a way to receive information on businesses not in the listings. The notice can be posted on Chesterfield Happenings, Private Chesterfield Facebook page and other places.
 - b. Ron wants to thank everyone, especially Fran, who worked on the project which turned out to be much more enormous and lengthier than projected.
3. **Senior Housing:** Ron made the motion:
“EDC pursue looking into Senior Housing and possibly worker housing.”
Rob seconded; vote was unanimous. The goal is to investigate how to pursue this topic. Ron contacted Jay Kahn who directed him to the Southwest Community Service organization. This organization strives to empower low income people and families. He spoke with the Executive Director, John Manning, and Chief Developmental Officer Keith Thibault. Both would like to come to a future meeting to discuss how Chesterfield can move in this direction. Ron will contact them about a date.
4. **Thomas Property:** The new owner has been to the planning board over another piece of property. It appears he is aware of the procedure. With the zoning change, time is of the essence. Faith will give John the new owner’s contact information, so that John can advise him on the timing.
5. **Signage Petition:** December 9th is the deadline for submitting it to the BOS. The petition has been distributed and already signatures have been acquired. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, please mail the original petition with signatures to Donna who will collect them for John.
6. **Business to Business Event:** Kate Chase of Kate Chase Designs had responded to Julianna’s request for help with the event. Because of the time needed for promotion, it was decided that Jan. 28th at about 6:30PM would be the best date and time for this virtual event. Julianna will contact Todd Horner about what type of items would be good to send out for enticement to join the event. These and other items will be purchased by the end of the year. With Kate’s designer skills, she will send out a “Save the Date” postcard and then little gift packs just before the event.
7. **Update on Business Questions:** Tabled until business listings are completed
8. **Letter to other Town Committees:** Fran is going to send it out to all the Boards and Chris Lord. Their feedback will be welcomed.
9. **EDC Website Update:** Tabled

Next Meeting Date
Thursday, Dec. 3rd
5:00PM - Via Zoom

Please note the following EDC meeting dates: Dec. 17th; Jan. 7, 2021; & Jan. 21, 2021

Meeting Adjourned at 5:54PM

Respectfully Submitted by,
Donna Roscoe, Secretary
November 19, 2020