

**Town of Boscawen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Barbara Randall – Chair, John Porter – Vice Chair, Tom Laliberte, Sean Goldman, Lorrie Carey – Ex-Officio & Vincent Pagano – Central NH Regional Planning Commission

Members Excused: Mason Donovan

Staff Present: Kellee Easler – Planning and Community Development Director, Ruth Ashby - Planning and Community Development Assistant, Kara Gallagher – Planning and Community Development Coordinator

Guests Present: Charlie Niebling, Town Forester & Resident, Mary Allard, Volunteer Applicant, Emma Richmond-Boudewyns, Marketing Manager of Fresh Start Farms

Chair Randall opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

PCD Coordinator Gallagher completed roll call.

Tom Laliberte arrived after roll call at 5:35.

Minutes:

Ex-Officio Carey motioned to approve the 3/05/24 draft minutes as written. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Annual Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Ex-Officio Carey motioned to re-elect Barbara Randall as Chair. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Chair Randall motioned to re-elect John Porter as Vice Chair. Seconded by Mr. Goldman. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

New Business:

- Review Volunteer Appointment Application and Interview – Mary Allard. Ms. Allard would like to be a member. Chair Randall reads her work in the Concord Monitor on the weekends, where she writes for the Town Crier, which is a weekly local events section. Ms. Allard currently is employed at the Boscawen Library. PCD Director Easler mentioned Ms. Allard was the recording secretary for land use boards for years. She recently moved back to Boscawen. Ms.

Allard said she has always been interested in government. She worked for the state of NH for 35 years in a few capacities. In 2006 she retired and has done part-time work since. Ex-Officio Carey asked Ms. Allard what she sees as our greatest opportunity for economic development in Boscawen. Ms. Allard said she feels a need for some type of meeting place for the town. Ms. Allard talked about potentially a community swimming pool, as well as the potential for Commercial Street.

A motion to approve Ms. Allard as a member was made by Mr. Goldman. Vice Chair Porter seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

The recommendation will now be brought in front of the Select Board. It will be on the Select Board agenda for Thursday, May 16. Ms. Allard was told to be at the Select Board meeting on May 16 at 6pm.

Old Business: discussed next out of order of agenda.

Pavilion Update:

Charlie Niebling was present to discuss the pre-application for the Pavilion project. He notes this reflected the discussion the subcommittee has been having regarding this project. Elements of the project and the needs were on the back of the application. The total project cost estimate and estimate of what is being requested for the grant was on the front. Mr. Niebling has already met with Bill Gegas with the Division of Parks to present our project and he was supportive. Mr. Gegas feels most elements if not all elements quality for matching support. The application needs to be submitted by June 7.

Through Vice Chair Porter, we are getting pro bono assistance from an architect to develop options regarding bathrooms at Dorval House. There is also a person in town, Charlotte Ferritto, who will be preparing an artist's rendering of potential pavilion depictions in place to imagine what it will look like. Hopefully this will inspire people to support the project.

The next major step will be to submit the application then get the green light back from the state to submit a full application in Nov/Dec 2024. The funding will not happen until 2026, if it gets approved. The state and national park service must approve the project in fall of 2025.

Mr. Laliberte questioned what happens if the budget goes much higher in the interim. Mr. Niebling said there is a large contingency built into the budget for this issue. Facilities Director for the Town of Boscawen, Gary Moore, is going to help by reaching out to contractors to get some costs regarding the build and renovation. The pavilion would be bid as well as the remodel of the bathroom. With successful bidders we will have firm agreements.

Chair Randall made a motion to accept the application for approval and submission, Mr. Goldman seconded. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

New Business:

2nd Annual Pumpkin Ride and Walk - Josh Davis, a manager with the Smoke Shack, would like some clarification for what is needed at the festival. It was decided we would like 1 food trailer from Smoke Shack.

Ex-Officio Carey said that Confections by Kate, a cookie vendor, was there last year. Batulo's Kitchen was also discussed.

Ms. Ashby will send an email to Mr. Davis at the Smoke Shack to let him know. The consensus was to request food from 11am to 3pm to coincide with the PD/Fire Department softball game. It was also discussed that last year there were probably 100-150 people and that we hope for more this year.

Emma Richmond-Boudewyns joined the meeting to discuss Fresh Start Farms which has 3 locations, one being in Boscawen. Fresh Start Farms has several different programs that they administer. Fresh Start Farms began leasing Pustizzi fruit farmland in 2022. She was present to give the town an update on what they are doing. Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns thanked Vice Chair Porter and Mr. Donovan, for inviting her. She passed out some pamphlets regarding Fresh Start Farms. She said it is an incubator farm run with the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS). They work with refugee individuals who are moving to NH and northern Mass and getting refugee status. They help relocate and set up language training, job training, and anything else needed. Fresh Start Farms has a large staff that does onboarding, but farm staff includes only about 5 people. They also give technical assistance and help with sales. Through their food hub they manage a CSA and some wholesale accounts, mostly funded through grants. There are food pantries that pay for Culturally Significant Crops that are grown by the incubator. Fresh Start Farms has about 25 farmers across 3 different farm sites. One farm is in Dunbarton and has 13 farmers of mostly Somalian descent. Their Concord farm has 4 farmers, and the Boscawen farm has 3 farming families, which include 6 farmers from Nepal and 2 from the Congo. Exciting things planned for this year:

- Get a sign at Pustizzi Farm. Several members gave suggestions to Emma for people who make signs.
- Help farmers find markets for their produce and perhaps get a Food Bank contract.
- Help the Pustizzi location develop in a way that farmers are self-sufficient.

Right now, Fresh Start Farms has some funding through a federal farmers market promotion grant, which is about 250K over 3 years. They help farmers try different ways to run the farm stand as a business. They also discussed agritourism at the farm.

Ex-Officio Carey told Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns that she can post anytime on the Depot Rd/Rail trail sign regarding information about the farms or post at Gerrish Station.

PCD Director Easler told Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns about the town wide yard sale on May 18th, should they want to put any produce, flowers, or baked goods on sale.

Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns will keep the committee posted via Vice Chair Porter or Mr. Donovan about developments/events they have.

Updates from Central NH Regional Planning Commission:

Mr. Pagano has spoken to local bike organizations regarding the fall festival, and some said they were interested and had the date available. Ex-Officio Carey suggested we get them to save the date. Ex-Officio Carey has a template she will send out to save the date. It was noted Franklin Ebikes is selling the business so it is not known who the new contact will be.

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137 **Vice Chair Porter motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Chair Randall. All in favor. None**
138 **opposed. Motion passed,**

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140 **The next meeting will be held on June 4, 2024, at the Municipal Facility.**

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142 *Respectfully submitted by Ruth Ashby.*

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