

**Town of Boscawen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Final Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 11th, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Barbara Randall—Chair; John Porter—Vice Chair; Jacob Martin; Tom Laliberte

Excused: Adele Sanborn

Absent: Mason Donovan—Alternate

Staff Present: Kellee Easler—Planning & Community Development Director & Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning & Community Development Director

Guests Present: Vincent Pagano—Central NH Regional Planning Commission; Bill Murphy-Penacook Boscawen Water Precinct & Don Moyer—Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

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

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien completed roll call.

Minutes:

Chair Randall requested one change: Line 75-Change May 2nd to June 6th.

Mr. Porter motioned to accept the 05.02.23 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Martin. All in favor. None opposed. One abstention.

New Business:

Appointment Application: Chair Randall said Mr. Sean Goldman submitted an application for appointment. Unfortunately, Mr. Goldman was unable to make the meeting. Chair Randall said she had the opportunity to meet Mr. Goldman at the last Police Advisory Committee meeting, and wanted to recommend that he join the EDC. If everyone was in agreement, Chair Randall would go to the Select Board to have Mr. Goldman sworn in. All concurred.

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail: Mr. Moyer has been meeting with PCD Director Easler and Deputy PCD Director O'Brien monthly. He has been kept in the loop about the redevelopment of the Commercial Street area, and the group has an interest in the topic. One of the things the Rail Trail lacks is destinations, specifically shops, restaurants, and lodging. Last year, they gave the state \$110,000 to help them purchase .6 miles of abandoned railway. The state now owns to the south end of the Hannah Dustin Island. Last fall, \$45,000 was given to extend the trail to the

north face of the Route 4 overpass. This spring they submitted a \$75,000 grant for further expansion and will find out in October if it was awarded. The vision for the rail trail system statewide would be to connect from the Massachusetts border to the Vermont border which equals 115 miles. As of right now there are delays in Concord and one or two other areas acquiring their sections to complete this. Once that finally happens, a lot of traffic would come through Boscawen, and there would be a need for the destinations previously discussed. Chair Randall asked if Mr. Moyer was meeting with other towns other than Boscawen about these issues. So far, he has monthly meetings with one other town. PCD Director Easler said she applied for a grant for the development of a recreation area at the Merrimack County Boat Launch, which is right next to the Rail Trail. Mr. Moyer said that would be a great future destination. Chair Randall mentioned there were some interested parties that wanted to make donations. Mr. Moyer said that would be great. Mr. Moyer said in addition to being Vice Chair, he is also head of the maintenance team. One of the projects taken care of by the maintenance team are the 10 informational kiosks, which are in various states of repair. Mr. Moyer provided a handout of the standard kiosk they'd like to use going forward. The kiosks would be 6'x6' with a 4' tall and 5' wide informational area. They would like to work with a digital mapping company to create customized maps for the areas in which they would be placed. These would be "You Are Here" maps, with trails showing how many miles and how to get to the surrounding towns. As for trail map handouts, they are moving away from paper hand outs and moving towards QR Codes. The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail are trying to raise money for a prototype to standardize and replace all the existing kiosks along with new benches and potentially picnic tables. The estimated funds needed would be \$1,100. Vice Chair Porter and Ex-Officio Carey offered to make donations to get Mr. Moyer to the \$1,100. Mr. Moyer thanked them for their generosity. Chair Randall said she would reach out to Ex-Officio Carey to find out how much she was willing to donate. Mr. Moyer said he would purchase the materials and submit the receipts.

Old Business:

Fall Festival Update: Chair Randall said the conversations with Avaloch were not going in the direction she had been hoping for, and the businesses that the EDC have reached out to have not had great responses. She does not believe the Fall Festival will happen this year. But she offered a new option. There will be a Visioning Session for the Planning Board with Central NH Planning Commission down on Commercial Street for a potential Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. Chair Randall asked if there had been a date set. Mr. Pagano said they are waiting for information for the mapping for the existing water lines. Next, CNHRPC will meet with Public Works Director Dean Hollins. Then, they will need to find out where the district lines will be drawn. Once all the needed information is gathered, a firm date will be set.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies: Mr. Pagano said the CEDS Project Ranking Subcommittee completed the review process and quite a few Boscawen projects scored well. CNHRPC staff are working to put together the final ranking list based on their efforts. This will set Boscawen up for more support when applying for future grants. There will be a meeting at 1:00 p.m. on July 17th with the full CEDS group. PCD Assistant Kara Gallagher and Chair

Randall will attend via Zoom. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked if we will receive the scores at that meeting. Mr. Pagano said hopefully it will be ready for the meeting.

Tax Increment Finance District: As previously discussed, the Planning Board will be working on a Visioning Session for the development of Commercial Street. CNHRPC is waiting for water line information, a meeting with PW Director Dean Hollins, and other information about the TIF boundaries. Mr. Pagano said that Fisher Ave will likely be included in the district because that location is where the water lines come from. Mr. Murphy offered to send the most recent water maps that the Precinct has. He said the problem with the Old Commercial Street system was that it had been patched many times over the years. PCD Director Easler asked if there had been discussion on including River Road in the TIF. PCD Assistant O'Brien said the sewer and water lines don't extend far into River Road. The reason the area has become so difficult was because of a canal that used to run through the area and was abandoned, as well as a couple of penstocks. He said there were two lines, one abandoned and one live. Vice Chair Porter said the water lines stop at his house, but he believed there were water lines on the other end coming from King Street at the Highway View Farm. PCD Director Easler said there is a property on River Road that is zoned Industrial and would be great to integrate into the TIF. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien had suggested to the PB to have a food truck during the Visioning Session, and to invite Commercial Real Estate agents. Mr. Laliberte asked how much land will be developed. PCD Director Easler said one abutting property was a 13-acre gravel pit. The owner of that gravel pit will eventually want to develop the property and will be looking to the town for guidance at that time. There are 3 other parcels being discussed, but none of them have much land. All buildings on those 3 parcels were taken down last year but are still waiting for EPA sign off. There are abutters that would potentially be willing to sell to the right investor, that would be willing to work with the town, or were already placed on the market to sell. Mr. Matt Taylor will be attending the August 1st Planning Board meeting and will provide an update. Chair Randall suggested holding a joint meeting on August 1st with the Planning Board, to be involved with the future Visioning Session. Mr. Murphy asked if there were any plans to survey the area. PCD Director Easler said not yet. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked if the Municipal Transportation Tax had passed, could that money have been used towards surveys of town roads. Mr. Pagano said he was not sure; the RSA was vague. It must be used towards anything to do with transportation and gave examples but did not specify what the tax could be used for. Currently, Impact Fees may only be used for development of new roads, and not maintenance.

Other Business:

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked if the EDC wanted to put the Municipal Transportation Tax back on the Warrant Article for Town Meeting 2024. Vice Chair Porter suggested waiting a year to do more research. Discussion ensued.

PCD Director Easler said starting in August, there will no longer be PCD staff in attendance during the EDC meetings.

Vice Chair Porter motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Martin. All in favor. None opposed.

The next meeting will be held on August 1st, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.