

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

April 29, 2016 – 8:30 A.M.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Jonathan McCallion, Chair  
Councilor Martin Dumont, Vice-Chair  
Councilor David Witham  
Councilor Dale Sprague

Administration/Staff Present: City Manager, Bob Belmore  
Deputy City Clerk, Elise B. Brelis  
Director Public Works/Utilities, Mike Bobinsky (arrived  
8:37 am.)  
Director Development Services/ Planning, Shanna  
Saunders, (was called into meeting while in progress.)

Other: Judy Curry, Foster's Daily Democrat

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Councilor McCallion called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES.

**Councilor Witham moved to approve the minutes of the February 29, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dumont and passed, 4-0.**

SALE OF FORMER POLICE STATION SITE

City Manager Belmore reported that the deal to purchase and develop the former Police Station between the City and Claude Gagnon fell through when Mr. Gagnon realized he could not make the numbers work. Committee members discussed coming up with another RFP; benefits of lease/purchase which would allow the City to maintain some control considering that this is a sensitive location in the middle of town versus rethinking it entirely now that two qualified buyers could not see it working. The City could put enough work into it, asbestos remediation, sprinklers, etc., to make it build out ready. CM Belmore said he has already nominated it for a Brownfield's assessment. Councilor Sprague wondered if it might be more valuable as just land. He also thought that we might need to reach out proactively to let people know our vision and know that this opportunity is here, especially if tied in with the Plaza property and potential mass transportation. The City Manager welcomed the Committee to have an open house, invite everyone, and walk downtown to share our vision. Ms. Saunders cautioned that one developer for multiple properties might not work out as expected. She asked if we had considered a charrette.

***Councilor Sprague, seconded by Councilor Dumont, made a motion to have staff and DRED members attend the next meeting of the EDC to hear our vision. The motion passed, 4-0.***

Councilor Witham said, “We don’t know what we don’t know.”

#### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

The City Manager said that once the budget has passed we can start to refine this process. Various streets were recommended such as Main Street, Constitution Way and Washington Street and, perhaps separately, the Hilltop School. Ms. Saunders can look into separate TIF’s. Councilor Dumont talked about possibly shrinking the boundaries of the Historic District. The Committee members mentioned the recent change in the law with respect to accessory dwellings. Reaching out to Aclara Technologies, LLC was suggested, as they have a stake in this.

#### BRETON’S CLEANERS BROWNFIELDS UPDATE.

The City Manager did a site walk with DES, EPA and SRPC representatives and received very favorable feedback. The City hope to get funding for a total cleanup with a partnership among all of them. All are excited and think it would be great. We do not have a timetable yet, but the City Manager said it is on the front burner.

Councilor Sprague wants updates about what is going on across the bridge. Councilor Dumont said that it was diesel or something along the railroad. Councilor McCallion wondered if there is any incentive to tie projects together between Berwick and Somersworth. The consensus was that this could be something to pursue.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Cumberland Farms was discussed: a new proposed site to open on Route 108 and one to renovate on High Street. Other pending projects were mentioned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

***Councilor Witham moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sprague and passed, 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Elise B. Brellis, Deputy City Clerk