

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
August 1, 2017 4:30pm.

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
 City Planner, Shanna Saunders
 Deputy City Clerk, Kelly Gagne

Councilor MacCallion called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Witham to accept the minutes of the meeting of May 5, 2017 as presented, Motion passed 3-0; with Councilor Sprague abstaining.

FORMER POLICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING & SITE

Manager Belmore started by stating that someone may have been interested in a restaurant for the site. Director Saunders called him today and he said that he was not ready to move forward at this time. Manager Belmore stated that \$51,000 round figure cost for clean-up of the building, and that the old oil tank may be an issue and could raise the price another approx. \$3,000. Councilor Witham would like to see us formally put it on the market, with a Realtor. Councilor Sprague would like to see the Somersworth Plaza finished first. Councilor Dumont recommended we wait for the Plan NH charrette.

Director Saunders stated that we could have the Somersworth Plaza be the main focus and other opportunities around it such as the former police station being discussed at the planning charrette.

| The Committee decided to wait for the September Plan NH charrette. Director Saunders confirmed it should be available in 30-60 days after the charrette. However, there was consensus that by the end of the 2-day event the Council would have a good idea of what the report would conclude and recommend.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX RELIEF INCENTIVE: 79-E APPLICATIONS

The former Hilltop School and Somersworth Hotel 79-E applications were discussed. Councilor Witham voiced his concern about vacant buildings in the City and that they are not good for our

vitality. There was lengthy discussion about the additional tax relief due to the location in the historic district. Councilor Dumont expressed his idea of there being a beginning and completion date when a plan is introduced and the application accepted. Councilors agreed. Discussion ensued about Somersworth Hotel investors, regarding length of time to repair etc. Councilor MacCallion asked if we could revisit approved 79-E applications at any time. Manager Belmore confirmed that yes you can review and reduce the years or rescind it provided the developer did not fulfill the obligations that were relied upon by the Council in their approval process.

Motion made by Councilor Witham for the Economic Development Committee to support the 79-E application for the Somersworth Hotel, seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed with a vote of 4-0

Motion made by Councilor Witham for the Economic Development Committee to support the 79-E application for the former Hilltop School, seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed 3-1, with Councilor Sprague opposing, stating that he doesn't like the way the project is flowing overall. He indicated a concerned with the amount of parking that will be needed, and that it will take away from the public area outside.

FORM BASED CODES

Director Saunders passed out a hand out on form based code. Form based code is a land development regulation. Director Saunders explained the hand out in detail. She stated that the City of Dover has a form based code in the downtown corridor that went into effect about 2 years ago. Councilor McCallion inquired if we could designate a specific part of the city as a form based code area. Director Saunders answered yes we could do that.

Councilor Sprague specified that there are new spots that we could work on, but old areas could be difficult. The High Street corridor should be also considered. He indicated that people like being able to park in one spot and visit a few shops in one location; it's more appealing than getting in your car all the time. Saunders handed out Design Regulations that were implemented in the City of Laconia in lieu of an actual Form Based Codes regulation although the Design Regs incorporated some of the Form Based Codes criteria.

Counselor Dumont suggested sharing this during the charrette.

Committee decided to keep this item on the agenda for future discussion.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

Director Saunders noted that the presentation is the same as last meeting on May 5, 2017, with pages 13-15 being new information. She explained the potential projected income from investors in the sample area. Councilor McCallion expressed support for a TIF district.

Councilor Witham doesn't see how a TIF and 79-E can co-exist. If he is a developer he would rather have leverage provided by 79-E tax relief. Councilor Sprague stated that TIF's don't work in depressed areas. Councilor Sprague states a 79-E is more beneficial for any developer.

Councilor Witham stated vacant buildings are our number one concern; 79-E is a better option for any developer. Further discussion on pros and cons were discussed. Councilor McCallion suggested we wait until after the charrette in September.

MISC
NONE

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Dumont, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote and the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk