

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM  
January 23, 2018 4:30pm.

Committee Members present:      Councilor Martin Dumont, Chairman  
   Councilor Dale Sprague, Vice Chairman  
   Councilor Jonathan McCallion  
   Councilor Denis Messier

Administration/Staff present:      Bob Belmore, City Manager  
   Shanna Saunders, Director of Planning & CD  
   Robin Comstock, Economic Development Manager  
   Shanti Wolph, Code Compliance  
   Judi Currie, Press  
   Trish Harris, City Clerk,

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

The meeting started with introductions. New employee, Shanti Wolph, Code Compliance, shared his background and his impressions of Somersworth to date. There was discussion about property inspections and procedures.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor McCallion, seconded by Councilor Messier to accept the minutes of the previous meeting of as presented, Motion passed 3-0. Sprague abstained.

HB 316 POTENTIAL FOR CITY ADOPTION

Director Saunders explained that HB316 is a new property tax exemption enabling legislation, similar to 79E but there is no district or boundary; it would be for whole city. It could be designated for industrial use, commercial use, or both. If adopted, it is adopted for a period of 5 years and the tax exemption is good for 10 years following the new construction. The exemption is uniform once established.

Councilor McCallion asked what stops large companies or properties from benefiting from this tax exemption. Director Saunders clarified that it is only for new construction or expansion of existing building sites.

City Manager Belmore stated that he received a letter from an industrial manufacturing company that is interested in acquiring a Somersworth property. They are requesting the City consider adopting this property tax assessment relief under HB316. EDM Comstock stated that this company is in a due diligence period and is very interested in this site. It meets their needs and they want to make a decision.

City Manager Belmore reported that Dover has put a hold on adopting HB316. According to the staff report from the City Manager in Laconia, they are moving forward with adopting B316, and it looks like it will be passing in the near future.

Councilor Sprague said he doesn't think this is for Somersworth. The sponsors of the Bill are from the north country of the State including Carroll County. Councilor Sprague said based on the information today, he is against it. More information could change his mind.

Councilor Messier said he is not ready to say no. He is concerned about the industrial space that has been vacant for years.

Councilor Dumont said they do not have to decide on this today. After lengthy discussion, ***consensus of the committee was not to move forward with recommending the adoption of HB316 at this time.***

#### FORMER POLICE STATION PROPERTY

There was lengthy discussion about whether to sell, develop or demolish the former Police Station Property.

Cost of tearing down the building would be \$50-60,000. There are no restrictions on setbacks in the business zone.

Councilor Sprague said he likes the idea to develop the property with the Plaza redevelopment.

Director Saunders said there have been interested buyers, but nothing pending at the moment.

Sprague said if it is sold, it will need to be sold with restrictions. It needs to continue with the vision that has begun on Market Street.

***Councilor McCallion and Councilor Dumont agreed to rescind their support for a resolution to put the property on the market that was voted on at the December EDC meeting.***

Councilor Messier asked if there was a current inventory of city buildings.

EDM Comstock said she is working on a current Inventory of City Property. She also informed the committee that she has been attending CIBOR meetings and will share this, and other city owned properties at these meetings.

After lengthy discussion, ***consensus of the committee to do nothing at this time, but they are willing to accept any proposals from interested developers.***

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP – EDM UPDATE

EDM Comstock reported that she has been meeting with commercial realtors, touring all the different properties. She said she is looking to plan a Commercial Banker round table in the future. She has also been talking to an entity that is interested in properties in Somersworth.

## NEW BUSINESS

None

## OLD BUSINESS

None

## NEXT MEETING - FEBRUARY 20, 2018 AT 4:30 P.M.

## MISC

Chamber of Commerce Business Before Hours event in Council Chambers, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 8:00am-9:30am.

Tri-Chamber Legislative Reception will be held at Frisbie Hospital's Community Center on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm-7pm.

Land Use Board Dinner will be held at the Great Falls Hall on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 5:30pm-8:00pm.

## ADJOURNMENT

***Motion made by Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Sprague, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with a 3-0 vote and the meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Trish Harris, City Clerk