

## Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Committee - December 8, 2015

*Attending: Bill Tymoczko, Paul Rabs, Byron Vinton, Jim Boothby, Perter Stewart, Frank Dunbar, Mark Eastman, Rich Rotella, David Kee, Linda Plourde, Daphne Eyerer, John Paul Lalonde*

David Kee called the meeting to order; meeting minutes were read and accepted. Our new Community and Economic Development Director, Rich Rotella, was introduced.

Ad Hoc Group – Chairperson Paul Rabs gave copies of their report thus far. The group has a target date of January 5, 2016 to finalize and incorporate any additional ideas and comments that come in. They plan to take their findings to the Town Council after their presentation to the BEDC at the January meeting. Paul stated that David Kee had collected and given to them all ideas, public polls, letters, etc., available and charged them with forming a mission statement and sorting through and gathering additional information and comments. Paul pointed out that interim Town Manager Sue Lessard spent some time going over the report and adding her opinions. Several on the Ad Hoc committee were in attendance and Paul thanked them for their participation. His e-mail is on the report for any additional comments or thoughts. David Kee thanked him and committee, stating the report is great; but the next step is to *bring up one or two items from the report each month to the BEDC and the Council* – things that can be implemented. The Comprehensive Plan Committee is to have copies of the report and their input sought; as well as Bucksport Next. The Ad Hoc group has been meeting since September, and will finish their obligation as of the January 5 deadline and January BEDC meeting.

YMCA update -- Bill Tymoczko reported that he and Jim Boothby met with Rich Rotella and Sue Lessard, attempting to clear up who would be responsible to care for our sports fields (our Recreation Dept. or other), and other details. The group will then meet with the Ellsworth YMCA Treasurer and Director Peter Faragher to work out a proposal to be presented to our Town Council. Bill stated that the YMCA has a national presence that would be a real plus for Bucksport. This meeting will be soon; they will present the proposal after the first of the year, with a full recommendation from the BEDC.

There were questions from the public: Mary Jane Bush asked if the Recreation Dept. would continue? Bill said he believes the YMCA would take over the Rec. Dept. Valerie Shaffner asked who will do the staffing? Bill stated that's not settled yet, but there would not be a lot of change at first, other than some expansion of youth and elderly offerings; the Y employees would mostly be from Bucksport, it is hoped. Most of the same people will continue to run the sports programs, Peter Stewart said. Fees would not increase, Jim Boothby said. There was a question about our fitness programs and Orland's fitness center. Bill stated the Y is interested in a wide programming format, much more than fitness – and we would be able to work with other programs, combining efforts. When asked about a facility, Bill stated there would not be one at first, but at some point that would come into the plan. A possibility might be an option to purchase the Fitness Center currently owned by AIM – a facility is longer term, as we increase the Y presence here.

Mary Jane Bush asked how this equates to the town costs and fees. Jim Boothby said the town would pay the YMCA a fee, not each person. He said this is all preliminary, and will be discussed. Mary Jane had come from the Comprehensive Plan committee, where Tim Emery was wondering about costs and YMCA fees to the public. She stated the Bangor analysis, when looked at, had cost as a key factor in not moving ahead; and said we need to know ahead of time what kinds of costs there will be to individuals. Jim Boothby explained that we need to go with Ellsworth first because we're in Hancock County. Jim said we would know ahead of time what fees and costs would be, and if we decide to go forward, we would have someone on the Ellsworth Y Board. David Kee said we would look at all their offerings and services and decide what we'd want. Membership also covers using the Ellsworth facilities. Bill Tymoczko said he feels this is a good opportunity, and we may not get another; the national brand is a very good thing for our community in terms of development. Jim Boothby reminded us

that the YMCA Board of Directors hasn't approved it yet, nor has our own Town Council. Linda Plourde asked if we are free to approach Bangor or Belfast Y if Ellsworth doesn't work out; Bill said we are.

Food Vendors – Mark Eastman has sent ordinance ideas to committee members; Peter Stewart suggested Mark write up proposed ordinances and submit them to the Ordinance Committee. Byron Vinton expressed a concern that some public comment has been negative, with the idea that it would not bring more economic development to our downtown, and might ruin the park-like setting of the waterfront walk. Peter Stewart said he had actually heard just the opposite comments, which is why the Ordinance Committee needs to look at it. Mark Eastman explained that the food vendor area might be a parking lot, and not necessarily the waterfront walk itself. He stated all businesses would do better with more people downtown. Bill Tymoczko said he feels it makes more people stay in an area when food and other vendors are offered. Byron said a destination restaurant might draw more visitors. Mark pointed out that often these food carts are trial runs for future storefront businesses. There was a discussion – Daphne Eyerer said that living in Manhattan she saw lots of vendors everywhere, hot dog stands, benchside carts, etc., and the people often prefer that type of setting to restaurants. Rich Rotella noted the pop-up shop folks asked if there might be tent sites available when the cruise ships are in next year. Peter Stewart said we should look at all ideas, and it would be foolhardy not to. After Ordinance Committee action there would be public hearings and it would go to the Town Council.

Pop-Ups – Rich Rotella explained that he had been in contact with all the pop-up shop operators and mentioned Creatively Maine, the Rock Shop, Friends of Fort Know, Fretz Goldsmiths, knitwear offered at Radio Shack, etc. There was great turn-out reported by David Kee on the opening night of the shops. The commercial for the shops has been edited and paid for; it should start running Dec. 7-8. Rich reminded all that this Friday, Dec. 11 there will be musicians playing in various shops, as well as the running of the “Ugly Sweater Contest”. The Rosen building has been well decorated, as well.

Dam Report – Rich Rotella cited the memo from Cintya Bailey of Bucksport Mill & Bucksport Energy re: the report of maintenance on the Alamoosook, Toddy Pond and Silver Lake dams. The report states their intention to maintain the Emergency Action Plans for the sites, and to adhere to the Lake Level Management Plan as previously established by Champion Int'l in 1994. Linda Plourde asked about the Town Council being asked to consider some form of water resources oversight group to act as a safeguard for all matters relating to the protection and future development of the water rights now held by Bucksport Mill, LLC. Peter Stewart said the Council will look at this at the meeting Dec. 10; but stated the Council has to be careful, as neither Alamoosook Lake nor Toddy Pond are part of Bucksport. David Kee asked if Linda had any contact with the Toddy Pond Association, and she stated she does as part of the Alamoosook Dam Committee and Alamoosook Lake Assoc. member. These groups would like to be a part of any “water resources” group we form, Linda explained. The Comprehensive Plan group looked at water resources at a prior meeting, but didn't think they were prepared to oversee this issue after their work is done. A Silver Lake Association should be formed, separate from town government, and Peter agreed. Linda has begun looking into that with the Maine Lakes Association. She asked for the Council to consider a water resources oversight group, as it affects so strategically Bucksport and the surrounding area.

Electric Co-Op – Rich Rotella stated he has been looking into this item from last month's meeting, as brought up by Joel Wardwell. He attached notes from meetings in 2008 on this, and will continue to research the possibilities by looking into the Madison and another eastern Maine co-op. There was discussion: John Paul Lalonde believes that with Bucksport Energy having such huge capacity it is not feasible to enter into a co-op with them. Paul Rabs saw other small co-ops bought out, and believes the maintenance and other cost issues would make it prohibitive. He mentioned that the nuclear Pilgrim Electric plant will go off-line in June of 2019; and thought that might cause Bucksport Energy to become fully operational.

Heritage Park Sign – Rich Rotella updated us on the sign work being done by Linwood Bridges, and said sign updates will be going up soon. Many changes are needed, with defunct businesses still listed. Rich asked what should be done with the old vinyl signs, and Peter Stewart said to bring it to the Town Council and they will address them. Peter asked if the town paid for that signage in the past, and several said yes. Daphne Eyerer asked about space for future businesses, and Peter said the town would certainly need to make provisions for new businesses.

Maine Policy Review -- Rich Rotella commented that Bucksport was the first town added to this *Maine Policy Review* source, which comes out twice yearly. The article is a plus for our community.

New Business – The Pecha Kucha event did not have great attendance, but was very good and showcased great talent locally, Byron Vinton said. It was noted Bill Fretz will be doing workshops this summer, and putting it on the web; we should promote this. David Kee said he will suggest a hook-up with The Stubborn Cow, too, and agreed it will bring people to the area, they will spend while here, etc. The new Art Gallery should also be supported in every way we can. Bill Tymoczko agreed, and said we need to work to get people to buy local, asking how do we promote that? Rich Rotella suggested asking the Alamo to post “Buy Local” on their marquee when not running a movie ad. John Paul Lalonde mentioned using “Chamber Bucks” instead of a cash prize for the contests. Linda Plourde said they had been used years ago with some success. Mark Eastman said we need to appeal to younger people, those with families.

Motion to adjourn- Linda Plourde, seconded, Peter Stewart. Adjourned.

Submitted by Linda Plourde

*Next regular BEDC meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016 @ 5:00 p.m.*