

Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Committee – December 1, 2016

Attending: Paul Rabs, Jim Boothby, Linda Plourde, Mark Eastman, Frank Dunbar, Daphne Eyerer, and Rich Rotella.

Paul Rabs called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Mark made a motion to accept the September and November minutes and Daphne seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Business Incubation Presentation: Roger Ferrell introduced himself (has a background in economic development) and explained how he brought church group up from South Carolina to volunteer in Bucksport. He presented to the group on a business incubator project (bGen which he and others collaborated on in South Carolina) where they received a \$180k federal grant to begin their work. City provided the building which was pretty derelict and they did the work to fix it up and turn it into office/meeting space. Roger handed out a 2 page document (attached) about bGen. He stated the oldest entrepreneur in bGen is 66 years old and the youngest is 14 years old. He said 75% of the space in the building is open space but there is some closed space (a conference room and another little private area in the building) and that the building is available 24 hours. Business pays \$150/month rent for 1st year and then \$200/month for the second year and by then they should be up on their feet. 85% of their funding is external funding. Linda asked how this hooked up with our schools. Roger said it is up to our school system how they want to be involved.

Code Enforcement Officer Update: Jeff Hammond updated the group on planning board activity. Last month held a public hearing on Appendix K (Land Use Ordinance). The Council approved all the changes even the one the Ordinance committee declined. This month they will be looking at application for Great Pond Mountain Trust (creating a trail system on Upper Long Pond Road). The Site plan shows parking but they require more and they are interested in using the town's sludge facility on Upper Long Pond Road but the problem is that it is 1 mile from the trail head. He is also going to share with the board a letter he has drafted to the DEP asking preliminary approval of changes for dimensional standards in the Shore Land Zone. Right now any individual use has to be provided with a minimum amount of lot area and shore frontage. Many of the lots have no shore frontage and don't meet minimum land area which makes it extremely difficult to expand the uses. The letter is proposing we eliminate the dimensional standards altogether for properties in Downtown Shore Land District only. If planning board approves the letter will be sent to DEP. Another letter going to the planning board is coming from the Friends of Silver Lake commenting on board's approval of expansion of cemetery on Silver Lake Road. He said another part of Town Code being worked on now is Chapter 6 (Business Licensing) and has gone to Ordinance Committee. The only change they wanted to make is in fee schedule because right now new & renewed businesses licenses owners pay the same fee. He has drafted up language that will cut the cost in half for a business renewal license. He said the Ordinance Committee didn't want any fee for a license renewal, so they wanted that deleted which means that the entire revenue stream for license stream will go away because most of revenue is from renewals not new ones. He did more research into it because something didn't seem right so he checked with legal counsel who felt there would be constitutional issues there (equal and fair treatment). There has to be a good reason for waiving a fee for one application and not for another. There really is no good reason for doing that. He will be sharing information with the Town Council because it is being introduced to them and see if they want fees back in ordinance. Jeff sent a letter to a local business on Heritage Park Rd which has opened another business (U-Haul business) that needed to be permitted and wasn't permitted. There were signs put up that need permitting and they weren't permitted. They will be receiving a letter from him asking them to come in and talk to him about getting permits that are needed for the business. The Leadbetter Project is moving along but there have been some issues with

flooding recently and he met with officials from DOT and they couldn't identify problems except it is a construction site and the final drainage features aren't permanently in place there. The contractor on site is doing what they can to minimize any flow of water off site. The neighbor on that side was concerned about the impact of the water going into the basement of his building. On the other side of the lot the neighbor was concerned about trees being taken down but the trees were taken down yesterday and he wasn't sure where that was going to go. Mr. Leadbetter's surveyors are convinced where they put the pins is in the right place and that puts the trees on the Leadbetter property. The final update is that Wilson Hall was broken into the week before last they did substantial damage to the temporary door that was put in on the Franklin Street side. He said that door had to be replaced so they took care of that last week. He said there was no damage done inside but there was a flood light that was stolen. He has put out an ad for developer's who may be interested in the project. He said he hasn't published it yet but will probably do that at some point in time. The building still needs work done on the roof badly to prevent the water from coming in and that is going to take a huge commitment before that work can be done.

Economic Development Director Update: Rich said that he, the town manager and mayor met with Senator King and other members from the EDAT tour here at the Town Office and then toured the AIM properties. Senator King was going to reach out to President Brennan at MMA that message was delivered and shared with the Board of Trustees at their November 11th meeting. At this time no decision has yet been made on the project. Rich assisted with Election Day on November 8th and commented how smooth the process was and that all of the volunteers demonstrated fantastic teamwork. On November 10th, Rich accepted the 2016 Innovation and Creativity Award from DART for Paula Kee and Wednesdays on Main. On November 21st, Nancy Minott took over as the new coordinator for Bucksport Heart & Soul. The Town Council approved a resolve to fund the position with a \$20,000 stipend which would last until the end of December 2017. The group has made great progress and this transition will free Rich up to spend more time with Community & Economic Development. On November 28th, Rich spoke with Jeff McGlin who stated he would attend the December 8th Town Council Meeting and give a brief presentation on the status of the work done on the AIM property. Also on the 28th, Rich met with Amy Powers, director of Cruise Maine USA and they discussed the MS Fram. The dates for the call to port are late afternoon Sunday, May 6, 2018 until mid-afternoon May 7, 2018 and to repeat the call on Thursday, October 11, 2018 to Friday, October 12, 2018. We also found out that the American Cruise Line boats don't have any trips scheduled to Bucksport for 2017. The Independence doesn't set a schedule for Bucksport it docks here in inclement weather and the American Glory has been decommissioned and replaced by the American Constellation, a larger cruise ship whose schedule hasn't been set as of yet. Rich updated the group that Tara Law has moved into the Chamber building at the cost of paying her portion of utilities and no rent. He updated the group on all of the holiday activities planned for the month of December including December 8th a Special Night Out Downtown from 5-7 with live music and stores staying open later, December 10th @5pm the First Annual Parade of Lights beginning at the former mill parking lot and going to the Town Office, December 16th a Holiday Cocktail Party hosted by Main St Bucksport at the LaLonde house on Elm St., and December 18th free gift wrapping by Main St Bucksport in the Heart & Soul Building on Main St. Rich let the group know that Bucksport High School is going to be the host for the Maine State Class B Wrestling Championships on Saturday, February 18, 2017. Finally, Rich wanted to let everyone know that he completed his first year of service on November 30th and that he was very grateful to have been giving the opportunity to serve the Bucksport Community.

RSU 25 Update: Jim said the RSU is trying to attract more of the regional and state activities for the school (such as the Class B Wrestling Championships) to help bring more people into the community. Also, this past Monday, he was appreciative for Rich, Sue, and Peter Stewarts time to meet with the leadership council for the schools. The whole focus of the meeting was on the role of the schools and economic development. Jim has had this conversation with his administrators but actually to bring it to

the teachers was a unique opportunity. A lot of the teachers were taken back with a perspective that they hadn't really considered and they know the role they play in the community. We will continue to provide this opportunity for the leadership team. 6 years ago school system did away with department heads and incorporated the leadership team. Jim provided the group with a first draft of RSU 25 Strategic Plan Update (included with minutes). Letters will be going out to the public in all 4 communities after the New Year to provide them with an update to the strategic plan. There will then be opportunities for citizens to respond to a short survey and they are checking the temperature of making sure they are still lined up with the values and beliefs of the communities. It can be accessed through technologies, events in community, at sporting events through winter & spring with the goal being that when school returns in September a second draft will be complete.

Chamber of Commerce Update: Rich updated that the Turkey Trek just completed which was the last chamber sponsored event of the year. Also, he mentioned that Wreaths Across America is December 11th with the convoy coming through around 11am and there will be no stop in Bucksport this year.

Main St Bucksport Update: Mark announced that the group has received it 501-C3 status. He said they opened their own checking account so the Town is no longer their Fiscal Agent.

Heart & Soul Update: Rich said that a youth group was formed with roughly 10 students from the high school. The group will be entering a float in the parade.

New Business: Rich introduced the idea of a Splash Pad to the group and that he and his intern would do research for the project.

Old Business: None

Adjournment: Linda made the motion at 6:05pm and it was seconded by Mark.

Submitted by Rich Rotella

Next BEDC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 5th @ 5:00 pm

Council Chambers at the Town Office!