

## **Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Committee – January 5, 2017**

*Attending: Mark Eastman, Larry Wahl, Paul Rabs, Linda Plourde, Frank Dunbar, John Paul LaLonde, Peter Stewart, Daphne Eyerer and Rich Rotella.*

Peter Stewart called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Mark made a motion to accept the December minutes and Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

### **Public Participation:**

1. Chris Johnson (resident North Bucksport) appreciates the agenda on the Town website and requests that we add the minutes as well as the audio from the meetings.
2. Steve St Peter Jr (resident Bucksport) requests the Town purchase the land and building on US Route 1 next to Family Dollar. He would like to see that lot expand with the Family Dollar as he sees it as a money maker for the Town. He also requests the Town look into purchasing Eddy Mercer's property because he doesn't believe the buildings are doing anything and that they are a hazard. His worry is that homeless people will go into the buildings and get injured.
  - a. Rich spoke to Tom Ellis about the property. Tom is not interested in selling the property but he would entertain offers if anyone was interested in expanding commercially. He would construct the building and then lease it out.
  - b. Larry said that this property as well as 3 others coming into Town from Ellsworth are not in good shape and he would like to see those properties cleaned up. He asked if Tom won't tear down the building, would Tom consider cleaning up the property including trimming the shrubbery.
  - c. Peter suggested that in the spring time we will have a look at the properties coming into Bucksport and see what we can do.
  - d. Rich added that Steve added a second property (Eddy Mercer's property) but due to timing of the request Rich hadn't had a chance to reach out to Wendy Carpenter.
  - e. Peter said that we want to be wary of the Town purchasing any more land. We are pretty land rich right now and he would rather see people come in and develop the lots.
  - f. Paul agreed with Peter's comments saying he is not sure we want to get in the Real Estate business.

### **New Business:**

1. Request made by the Senior Resource Committee (SRC) to have more benches installed on Main St. Currently, there is a granite bench on this side of Main St located outside the Nicholson Building and on the other side of the road there are 6 located between the Local Variety & Community Pharmacy. Daphne said there was 1 also by the Harborview Restaurant. Dorothy Blair requested more benches on this side of the street because this is the side where the bus stops. She stated people don't come downtown for the summer festivities because there is nowhere for them to sit. She recommended having a bench by the old Bucksport Family Medicine because that would be a good place for the bus to pull in. She requested one by the hotel as the bus could pull in there as well. Larry Wahl suggested there be a bench in front of the Town Office. Peter Stewart asked if there was a price for the benches. Valorie Shaffner said they were \$899/per bench but she wasn't sure if that was a special price or not. Peter Stewart suggested going on another walk-about on Main St to see where benches could/should be placed. Peter suggested not doing it now but let's look into it during the spring as this will enhance the experience on Main Street especially with all the activities going on down there. Val said the specific model that was researched had the

ability to be bolted down in the summer but taken up and stored for the winter and a special device can be purchased to fill in the holes. Larry & Daphne agreed they liked the model that was presented. John Paul suggested that if this was something we were going to pursue that he would like to have additional options to review. Chris Johnson suggested having a park bench by the redevelopment site. He said there are people who walk down to Tozier's Market and would like us to think about putting benches down in that direction and just not from School St to Mechanic St. Chris agreed with others about having benches at the bus stops as well. Peter said he uses the walkway as a guide to where we should have benches on Main St. Daphne asked if there were bus stop signs. Dorothy said there were no bus stop signs that the drivers know where the stops are located. Daphne suggested we install bus stop signs and Dorothy said we may get more people using the bus if we have signs identifying that there is a bus and these are the locations.

2. Request from Main St. Bucksport for the use of TIF funds to hire a coordinator. Brook Minner explained the formation of Main St. Bucksport in 2014 after the closing of the mill. She mentioned the grant received from MFC and what came from it including a website and non-profit status. Brook read the mission statement of the group. This year the group is going to take on larger projects including the Bridge the Gap Race, Bucksport Arts Festival, International Maritime Film Festival and Downtown Holiday Events. The Main Downtown Center recommends a funding model for Main St Programs that is shared with municipal support, fundraising the group does, grants, business and private donations. Brook met with Sue a couple of weeks ago to gauge municipal support. They talked about a \$20,000 commitment on behalf of the Town in the next budget cycle, but because budget cycle isn't until July for the group to come to EDC to get approval of funds in the amount of \$10,000 to carry the group until the budget cycle process begins. Brook said the money being asked for is a bargain for the events Main St Bucksport is bringing to Town. They want to do events because they are fun and bring people to town along with positive publicity but at the heart of it all it brings economic development to the downtown. Peter raised a concern as a town councilor that the town hired an economic development director and in turn funded the Heart & Soul program and now funding a 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Why can't we work as one entity why as a town of 5,000 people do we need several people doing the same thing? Brook says this program has a different mission than Heart & Soul which is time limited and is going to end at the end of 2017. The focus of Main St program is the downtown and however you define that. The most successful programs she has seen in Maine (Belfast, Gardiner, Augusta) what works the best is these programs work hand-in-hand with the economic development director, who has a broader scope. This is laser focused on the downtown area. Most towns contribute to 1/3 of the budget which is a recommendation from the Maine Downtown Center. Brook said there aren't a ton of downtown businesses right now and their dollars are being stretched is it possible for town to start with funding of \$20,000. Part of the problem group will run into is without someone being paid it will be hard to get the commitment to find someone to run the events, write grants and to raise the money to keep the program going. Linda asked if the group would be asking for \$20,000 or \$30,000 in subsequent years and Brook confirmed \$20,000. A concern Peter shared was that he hears often from citizens that there are too many hands involved and no one is talking. Peter says the group isn't getting its message out so people understand who they are and what they do. The biggest issue is the public sees we are putting money towards people and not towards things. Paul said that he strongly favors foundations, coalitions and non-profit organizations He said he thought Wednesdays on Main was going to slide in under Main St Bucksport. Brook said that Paula wants to do it for another 1-2 years with the intent on passing it on to this board. Peter says if we can get under one umbrella that it looks better when going to one group instead of multiple groups. Linda thinks Main St Bucksport has put together quality events and pulled them together fast and this is what she was looking at for the downtown forever. Paul says

would like to move this forward to the Finance Committee. Larry says he supports Main St Bucksport and agrees with Peter as well but he has a problem with the commitment of 3 years. He would like to see it supported this year at \$30,000 and go annually from there. Peter agreed with Larry saying that other groups looking for money come out every year we can't guarantee long range monies because the budget changes. He wouldn't expect any money before February 1<sup>st</sup>. Peter said before this goes to Council that it gets packaged correctly so people understand what they are supporting. It has to be packaged that way so people in all over the town can understand it He said to get information on what other towns are doing with support and for events. John Paul suggested bringing someone from Belfast to speak to our Town Council about what they experience from their downtown group. 6-0 vote in support with 2 not voting.

3. Service Year – not taken up on agenda due to time restraints...

### **Code Enforcement Officer Update:**

1. Lighthouse Arts Center project is moving ahead and will hopefully be completed by the spring. Kathy contacted him and wanted to include a couple of new parts to the project including a kiln and a dark room.
2. The tower at Wilson Hall is severely leaning and he believes is suffering from rot. This is the area where the rain water is coming through at the heaviest levels. He called a crane company to remove the upper roof and put a temporary cap and that cost was \$4,400.
3. Chapter 6 Business Licensing Ordinance is being totally revamped with some licenses removed, one license added, fee structure has been changed, and the application review process has been streamlined. A public hearing on this will be held at the next Town Council Meeting and will be effective 30 days later.
4. Planning Board has sent letter to DEP to ease up on standards in Downtown Shore Land District. The request is to reduce the minimum lot size, the minimum shore frontage, and maximum lot coverage to 0.
5. Fee schedule from all municipal departments will be put in one document. This will be a tool used by everyone to find out any of the fees charged by the town. It was submitted to the Town Manager and will be brought to the Town Council for review.
6. Planning Board will take up retail marijuana moratorium.
7. Website will have some fixes including appearance and broken links. Asking the Town Council to form a committee to review website and make recommendations.

### **Economic Development Director Update:**

1. Since December, there has been interest at the AIM property, Sprague North Property, Park St, Industrial Park as well as the former Feldman Properties.
2. First meeting for the broadband grant with Axiom Technologies & EMDC was held in December. Stakeholders included Sue Lessard, Chris Grindle, Paul Rabs, Mary Jane Bush, Mark Eastman, Rich Rotella, Mark Ouellette (Axiom), Susan Corbett (Axiom) & Vicki Rusbult (EMDC).
3. Went to preview of 74 Main St as the building is up for auction and the auction is set for January 10<sup>th</sup> at 11 am.
4. Festival of Lights Parade had a fantastic turn out with a very good turnout for the New Year's Eve Ball Drop. The ED intern has created a master list of the holiday events so planning can begin much earlier next year.
5. The intern position has been approved through the end of the school year.
6. Planning has begun on celebration for the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 130<sup>th</sup> Library, and 20<sup>th</sup> Bay Festival. A proposal will be going to the Finance Committee for recommendation to the Town Council.

7. Jim, Jeff, Jef, and Rich met with Roger Ferrell at a site location for possible set up of the business incubator. The location wasn't feasible so we are looking for other locations for the business incubator.
8. 2016 Real Estate numbers for the town of Bucksport:
  - a. 101 total sales
    - i. Residential 85
    - ii. Commercial 3
    - iii. Multi-family 6
    - iv. Land 7
  - b. These sales do not include private or liquidation sales.

**RSU 25 Update:**

1. Rich shared a packet from Jim.
2. The public schools in Maine ranked 13 out of the 50 states.
3. January 24, 2017 will be holding public meeting on the strategic plan at 6 pm in the BHS library.

**Chamber of Commerce Update:**

1. Date for the Celebration will be July 21-23
2. Frost Fest will be held on February 18th

**Heart & Soul Update:**

1. John Paul said H&S Building was open for Festival of Lights and New Year's Eve Celebration
2. John Paul said is slow time right now so they are planning for future events
3. Rich said Heart & Soul will be presenting to the Town Council on January 26th

**Old Business:**

1. John Paul said he was contacted by Cathy Melio from Maine Community Foundation about the clock from the Methodist Church. She thinks there will be grant money available if there was an interested group.
2. Linda asked if anything further came from the trains.
3. Peter said talk to people in community and educate them on what is going on and we are going in the right direction.
4. Rich announced the Town was 1 of 19 to receive a \$200,000 EPA Grant in conjunction with EMDC.
5. Jeff asked if we wanted the recordings on the website. Peter said he thought it was already happening. Jeff said he would put them on going forward.
6. John Paul asked everyone to read Sue's Op-Ed that was in the Bangor Daily News.

**Adjournment:** Linda made the motion at 6:17 pm and it was seconded by Mark.

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Submitted by Rich Rotella

***Next BEDC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2nd @ 5:00 pm***

***Council Chambers at the Town Office!***