

Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Committee – April 6, 2017

Peter Stewart called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

I. Attendance:

- A. EDC Committee Members Present: *Mark Eastman, Larry Wahl, Paul Rabs, Jim Boothby, Frank Dunbar, John Paul LaLonde, Peter Stewart, John Wardwell, Daphne Eyerer, Ron Russell*
- B. Town Employees Present: *Jeff Hammond and Susan Lessard.*

II. Minutes:

- A. Paul R. made a motion to accept the March minutes and John W seconded the motion.
- B. The motion passed 10-0.

III. Public Participation:

- A. No public Participation.

IV. Request for gate behind 64 Main St on Waterfront Walkway

- A. Susan Lessard filling in for Rich Rotella
 - a. Understanding of walkway.
 - i. The Town has a series of easements that cover the walkway from beginning to end with some of it being private property which the town has easements that it obtained 25 years ago when the walkway was established.
 - ii. One of the easements is behind Fort Knox Inn (64 Main St) and when that easement was written it required the Town to install a gate on each end of the property line that was locked at night and opened in the morning.
 - iii. This easement also allows the property owner after the first 3 years to withdrawn permission if he so chooses for the walkway to be there at all.
 - iv. Fast forward ahead to when the hotel became part of Best Western at which point the property owner removed the gates because the Best Western didn't want a chain link fence on their property. Since that time there have been no gates on that property.
 - v. In late December 2016/early January 2017 the property owner contacted her and wanted the gates put back up because it was an annoyance to his customers to stay on the waterfront side on the first floor.
 - vi. The Town insures the property and holds harmless the property owner.
 - b. Complaints received by police department.
 - i. 2012 complaint on walkway was related to guest staying at hotel
 - ii. 2015 complaint because someone didn't pay their bill at hotel
 - c. Emails from Larry Green to Susan Lessard (Mr. Green was not in attendance)
 - i. Mr. Green states no further calls were made because it was an on-going problem and it had always been a problem.
 - ii. Mr. Green states the Town should relocate the walkway up on Main St because there wasn't enough business on Main St anyway.
 - iii. Mr. Green states he doesn't get his source of patronage from the people of this community.
 - iv. Mr. Green states the mill was his biggest client and that is gone.
 - v. Mr. Green requests signage by hotel letting walkers know that they are walking by a hotel.
 - vi. Mr. Green requests to have white fence spiffed up.

- d. Trip Advisor Reviews
 - i. Susan states there were 91 reviews from Trip Advisor with no one mention of a problem with the walkway.
- e. Committee Comments
 - i. Daphne – walkway important to residents and visitors
 - ii. Ron R – any compromise of installing signs stating quiet area?
 - iii. John Paul – highest response in surveys and stories from Heart & Soul respondents is walkway both from residents and visitors.
 - iv. Paul R – visited Trip Advisor and found only 2 comments related to walkway.
 - 1. One guest said they used the walkway and enjoyed it very much
 - 2. Other guest said stayed on ground level on walkway side and there was a privacy issue with people looking in the windows so they closed the drapes.
 - 3. Paul recommended no gates
 - v. Larry W – Recommended no gates and install quiet zone signs.
- f. Public Comments
 - i. Female 1 (no id) – had a relative stay at the hotel and the reason why they chose that hotel was because of the walkway.
 - ii. Female 2 (no id) – lives at Nicholson Building on the top floor and she doesn't hear noise.
 - iii. Female 3 (no id) – waterfront is our biggest asset. Lighthouse Arts Center placed her business with entry way from walkway. What message does this send to her?
 - iv. Male 1 (no id) – remembers when the walkway plan was discussed and has been biggest asset to the Town.
- g. Recommendation from Committee to Council
 - i. No gates
 - ii. Improve signage around hotel

V. Request for Additional Benches on Main Street

- A. Susan gave overview
 - a. 3 locations originally discussed increased to 5 locations
 - b. We need permission from private property owners.
 - c. Who will be responsible for liability if someone is injured?
 - d. Funds available from accessibility grant.
- B. Committee Suggestions
 - a. Paul R – send letter to privately owned properties because owners may want them to look a certain way. This could help stimulate business for them. They could advertise on them.
 - b. Peter S – Let Rich talk to business owners first to see if they are amicable to participating and then go from there.
- C. Public Comment
 - a. Female 1 (no id) – spoke to Jerry at hardware store who said he sells cast iron, 4 seasons patent coated benches for \$100 and they will assemble them for the business owners.

VI. Update on Broadband Internet Grant

- A. Paul gave overview
 - a. \$25k grant for evaluating going forward with broadband communications
 - b. Axiom Technologies (Machias, ME) leading the efforts

- c. Had 2 presentations
 - i. Fairpoint (14 miles of fiber installed in Town)
 - ii. Spectrum (72 miles of fiber/copper in Town)
 - 1. Jim B pointed out that Spectrum coming out with a plan for anyone who qualifies for free/reduced lunch could get service for \$19.95/month for 5mb of service
- d. Next Steps
 - i. Business questionnaires (looking for 20-25 respondents)
 - ii. General public questionnaires

VII. CEO/Planning Board Update

A. Jeff Hammond gave update

- a. Lighthouse Arts Center
 - i. Received all approvals
 - ii. Open date 4/22/2017
- b. Wilson Hall
 - i. Grant for rehab didn't make it past 1st Round
 - ii. Concerns raised that tower leaning more
- c. Planning Board met earlier in week
 - i. Taking up 3 topics right now
 - 1. What additional uses might be appropriate to have in the Industry Development District and Shore Land Zone associated with that.
 - 2. Marijuana Legislation Act, where the Town will have to decide if it wants the uses approved by that act and if so where?
 - 3. Request to DEP for a reduction of dimensional standards in the Shore Land District which would benefit further development of the Commercial Downtown Area.
- d. Elevator at Nicholson Building has been repaired and back in service.

VIII. Economic Development Director Update

- A. Peter mentioned that Rich left an outline in the packet in his absence.**

IX. Community Updates

A. RSU 25 (Jim Boothby)

- a. In budget season waiting on final word from legislature and that should be in June.
- b. Next budget workshop April 27th at BHS Library.
- c. Highlights
 - i. Jazz Ensemble finished 2nd place in State Competition
 - ii. Unified Basketball finished 2nd place in the State in its 1st year as a team
 - iii. 1st year robotics team qualified and is competing in Northeast Regional Tournament at UNH today.

B. Chamber of Commerce (Larry Wahl)

- a. Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony held last Tuesday close to 100 people in attendance at the Alamo Theater.

C. Main Street Bucksport (John Paul LaLonde)

- a. Last week hired, Brook Minner, part time director out of 10 applicants.
- b. This Sunday, Bridge the Gap Race will take place and end in Downtown Bucksport. Expecting 500+ runners to Town.
- c. Added 3 new board members at last meeting (Derek Tudela, Andy Lacher & Robin McCarthy).

- D. Heart & Soul (John Paul LaLonde)
 - a. Nancy has an update of what has happened and is happening on her reports on their website.
 - b. In March, held an event called Food, Farm & Flowers at the Heart & Soul Headquarters which was well attended with good discussion.
 - c. In April, will be holding an event for New Residents: what brought you to Town? What would you like to see to keep them here in Town?
- E. Friends of Silver Lake
 - a. No update
- X. Old Business
 - a. Paul Rabs said he followed up with Chief Geagan about Bike Racks which were brought up by a citizen at a previous meeting. Paul said that the chief thought there might be 1 or 2 available and recommended putting them on waterfront by restrooms.
 - b. Paul also thanked David Roza, of the Ellsworth American, for his fantastic coverage of Bucksport including the Chamber Annual Meeting.
 - c. Peter mentioned the MMA Board of Directors Meeting was cancelled due to weather and was being rescheduled in the month of May.
 - d. Larry mentioned the library had its doorbell hard wired thanks to funding from the town's accessibility grant.
 - e. Jim mentioned the partnership between B-Gen and Adult Ed beginning around summer.
 - f. John Paul asked for a status update of ReVision Energy's proposal. Sue responded that we are in the bill gathering stage and then will follow up with them.
 - g. Peter requested an update on the mill site. Sue responded that at the best of her knowledge that Phase II would be complete during the month of May.
 - h. Larry said there has been talk about needing additional storage space on the waterfront and wanted to know if we thought about Tom Goodman's place. Peter responded that we wanted something more than a garage but it could be considered.

Adjournment: Paul made the motion at 6:14 pm and it was seconded by John Paul.

Submitted by Rich Rotella

Next BEDC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4th @ 5:00 pm

Council Chambers at the Town Office!

Please note audio of this meeting is available on the town's website.