

**Town of Boscawen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Barbara Randall—Chair; John Porter—Vice Chair; Adele Sanborn; Jacob Martin; Lorrie Carey—Ex-Officio

Members Excused: Mason Donovan

Members Absent: Caroletta Alicea—Alternate

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler—Planning & Community Development Director; Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning & Community Development Director and Kara Gallagher—Planning & Community Development Assistant

Guests Present: Matt Taylor—Senior Planner at Central NH Regional Planning Commission; Vincent Pagano—Central NH Regional Planning Commission

Chair Randall opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

PCD Assistant Gallagher completed roll call.

Minutes:

Vice Chair Porter motioned to accept the 01.03.23 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Sanborn. All in favor. None opposed.

New Business:

Tax Increment Financing: Mr. Taylor of CNHRPC said it was his understanding that the town is considering looking into TIF Districts and would like to know how they work. He explained that a TIF District is a way to fund infrastructure needed for new development without placing a burden on the tax base or current taxpayers. Towns may set aside revenue generated from the increase in property values within a district for specific purposes. Mr. Taylor explained typically a municipality would issue bonds, or otherwise agree to fund public improvements needed for new infrastructure. The increase in tax revenue collected from the new development would be used to make the bond payments. Some reasons a town would implement a TIF District would be to diversify the tax base, create incentives for new business development, accelerate economic development, and fund infrastructure improvements. Many smaller communities use this process in order to fund improvements to water lines, sewer lines, roads and bridges. The steps for adopting a TIF District would include holding a public hearing by the Select Board prior to

Town Meeting. Town Meeting must adopt the provisions of RSA 162-k, which authorizes the creation of TIF Districts. Town Meeting must also approve the establishment of a TIF District, with boundaries, as well as a developmental program and finance plan. A district administrator and advisory committee must be designated in the TIF plan. The district administrator could be a local board. For example, the Select Board could be designated as the district administrator. Any future changes to the district, developmental program, or finance plan must also be approved by Town Meeting. Voters in town are in charge of the entire process at Town Meeting. Mr. Taylor said there are some limitations set out by the statute. These include, one TIF District cannot exceed 5% of the total land area of the municipality; all districts combined cannot exceed 10% of the total land area; one TIF District cannot exceed 8% of the total assessed value of the municipality; all districts combined cannot exceed 16% of the total assessed value; a majority of members of the advisory board must be owner/occupants of property in the municipality (for residential TIF Districts, all members must be owners of property or residents in the municipality); at least one member of the advisory board must be an owner/occupant within the district. At this point, Mr. Taylor presented some cities and town that have adopted TIF Districts. Using TIF Districts, Londonderry has added \$117 million in assessed value, Concord has added over \$50 million in assessed value, Keene has added over \$20 million in tax revenue, and Bedford has added millions of dollars to the tax base. Using TIF Districts, Bow was able to fund a waterline extension and road improvements to attract development in 2018, Enfield has funded several water, sewer and bridge projects since 2005, Jaffrey created two districts in 1999 to fund infrastructure for an industrial park and various improvements downtown, and Peterborough now has three districts since adoption in 1998 in order to fund multiple infrastructure projects throughout the town. Mr. Taylor explained the details of the finance plan for a TIF District. The plan must contain an estimate of the cost of improvements, sources of revenue, estimate of bond debt, and duration of the program. The tax increment may be set aside for a maximum of 30 years, or until improvements have been paid off. A 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting is required for the issuance of any bonds. This plan should be as flexible as possible; a reimbursement mechanism may be preferable to bonding. The town, county, and school district would continue to receive revenue from baseline assessments. It is recommended, though not mandatory by statute, that a development agreement and performance guarantee be required to ensure improvements that are needed for development are fully funded with the tax increment, grants, or private funds. Mr. Taylor wanted to highlight a few points about TIF Districts:

- TIF Districts do not change zoning requirements or affect property rights.
- Establishment of a TIF District does not increase taxes within or outside its boundaries.
- Once improvements are paid for, all future revenue will go into the general fund.
- The adoption of a TIF Plan does not require any expenditures by the town.
- A firm commitment from a developer should be required.
- All work related to construction of improvements and developments of site(s) must comply with local, state and federal regulations per statute.

Mr. Taylor asked if there were any questions. Vice Chair Porter asked if towns will use this as a way to fund improvements for an undesirable area. Mr. Taylor said yes, that is often the case. When a town has an area that cannot attract development without improvement of the

infrastructure, a TIF District will allow for funding of improvements that could not be funded otherwise. Mrs. Sanborn asked how this process could work when a town's water facilities are not controlled by the Select Board, but by a separate entity. Mr. Taylor said if a town was looking to fund a water line improvement and the town has a separate water commission, they would use the tax assessment to fund the improvement for a period of time to be determined, and then once the improvement is paid off, any revenue would go into the town's general fund. It would be an investment the town would initially make. Ex-Officio Carey asked if the district administrator delegated the paperwork to an outside consultant, could that be funded under the TIF District or would that cost be paid from town funds. Mr. Taylor said yes, any operation and maintenance would come from the TIF District. Chair Randall asked if there would be any drawbacks that the town should be aware of. Mr. Taylor said the main drawback would be if the town committed funds without a guarantee that development is going to come. Another drawback could be starting a TIF District with no increase in value, therefore there would be no funds to kick start the project. Ex-Officio Carey asked if the adoption of a TIF District and the TIF plan and finance plan could be voted upon at one Town Meeting. Mr. Taylor said yes, but the adoption must be approved first. Ex-Officio Carey asked how the town would avoid conflict with the school district. Mr. Taylor said the town would need to consult the school district and county about the TIF plan, and they would be allowed to review it and be able to comment on it.

Old Business:

Fall Festival Proposal: Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said she had a small update. She mentioned that Mrs. Sanborn suggested holding this event at Boscawen Elementary School. At the last meeting, Deputy PCD Director O'Brien was tasked with contacting Ashley Bathgate of Avaloch Farm Music Institute to see if they would be willing to host the Fall Festival. Ms. Bathgate responded that they would not only be willing to host, but they would like to have their own booth set up, as well as provide music entertainment for the event. At AFMI, there would be options to have the event set up inside, outside, or both depending on what businesses seem interested. This combination of indoor/outdoor would be useful if food trucks were to participate. The dates offered by Ms. Bathgate include September 23rd, September 24th, October 7th, October 8th, October 14th, or October 15th. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien thought AFMI would be a great place to hold this event because it would showcase one of Boscawen's businesses as a whole, instead of the elementary school. AFMI has the capacity to hold 115 people inside. Mrs. Sanborn asked how many vendors the EDC would like to have in attendance. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said she was hoping for around 30. Getting Boscawen businesses to attend would be the first priority, before moving to businesses in surrounding towns. PCD Director Easler has been meeting with the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail and they have mentioned that they would like to set up a booth. Chair Randall asked if an article could be written for the Newsvine asking local businesses to contact Deputy PCD Director O'Brien if they are interested in participating. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said she had sent out letters last summer to the businesses in town. She received some feedback that businesses wouldn't want to take a day off if there isn't decent attendance from the public. She agreed, but said if there is music and food available to entice attendance, it shouldn't be a problem to get residents to visit the festival. Also, holding the event on a Saturday or Sunday would make it easier for the public to attend. Mrs. Sanborn

suggested setting the date and time on October 14th, 1:00-4:00 p.m. All concurred. Chair Randall suggested getting on the BES calendar as a backup. All concurred.

Other Business:

CNHRPC Committee: Mr. Pagano of CNHRPC is helping start up a committee to discuss and manage the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan. This plan is produced every 5 years. The current plan was approved in 2019, so the new plan will be approved in 2024. Mr. Pagano provided a project priority list that all of the towns contribute to that work with CNHRPC and Southern NH Regional Planning Commission. He explained that they are looking for a member from each town to join this committee. The members would be tasked with looking over these projects and making sure their town's projects are appropriately represented. He said there may be a meeting at the end of February or beginning of March, and another in June. Mr. Taylor said having a member on this committee to represent Boscawen can help with grant funding as well. Chair Randall volunteered to become a member of this committee.

Planning and Community Development Department Update: PCD Director Easler wanted to inform the EDC that she has been meeting quarterly with Don Moyer, Vice President of the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail. Their meetings will now become monthly. The Rail Trail will eventually be expanded from Massachusetts to Vermont. Once that expansion happens, there will be a large volume of traffic through the Commercial Street area. She will update the EDC as new information comes in.

Making Matters: Mrs. Sanborn met with the owner recently and they are in the process of moving into the 4th space of the strip mall located at 197 North Main Street. She said they will be having a very small open house, which would not be something the EDC would attend but she thinks a tour another time would be a nice idea. Mrs. Sanborn suggested making the April meeting the tour of Making Matters. All concurred.

PBWP Public Hearing: Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said this will be on Wednesday, February 8th, at 5:30 p.m. She and PCD Director Easler will be attending as they both are in the Water District and receive water from the Precinct. It would be a good idea to have an EDC presence. Ex-Officio Carey said this could be a good time to raise a discussion about a TIF District for water and sewer improvements on Commercial Street.

Mrs. Sanborn motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

The next meeting will be held on March 7th, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.