

Town of Boscawen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 13th, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Barbara Randall—Chair; John Porter—Vice Chair; Michael Tardiff, Executive Director—Central NH Regional Planning Commission; Lorrie Carey—Ex-Officio

Members Excused: Mason Donovan; Caroletta Alicea; Adele Sanborn

Guests: Ross Cunningham—County Commissioner of Merrimack County Facilities; Maureen Callahan—Usource; Aaron Hinze—UConn Tab Program; Vincent Pagano—Central NH Regional Planning Commission

Staff Present: Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning & Community Development Director; Kellee Jo Easler—Planning & Community Development Director; Kara Gallagher—Planning & Community Development Clerk; Katie Phelps—Town Administrator

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

PCD Clerk Gallagher completed roll call.

Minutes:

Vice Chair Porter motioned to accept the 06.06.22 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Ex Officio Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

New Business:

Merrimack County Solar Project: Chair Randall welcomed Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Callahan. They were at the meeting to speak about a proposed solar project at the Merrimack County Complex. Mr. Cunningham told the Committee that the project was about halfway through the planning process. Merrimack County has put out an RFP for a vendor and has partnered with Usource as a consultant and for support during this review and selection process. Mr. Cunningham is hoping to get bids back by the end of August and have answers around October. Merrimack County is using the American Rescue Act funding for the project. They are going all in with the allowable amount of space and requests which would be the 5 MW DC. Mr. Cunningham expects the entire facility footprint to change over the next few years. In addition to the solar project they are also looking into paving all of the facilities lots and driveways and renovating the old nursing home facility, among other potential projects they are exploring. At this point, Mr. Cunningham had the Committee look at a visual presentation of the field where the solar farm would potentially be placed on the property. He said it is their goal to not have this

project be an eyesore to travelers passing by the facility. Depending on cost they may have to choose a second location which was shown in the presentation. Chair Randall said she is very excited about the project. She asked if all of the Merrimack County facilities will be run off of the solar array. Ms. Callahan said the goal is to be interconnected and to be able to serve as much of the load as possible. The state has a cap of 5 MW. There is no expectation that there will be solar to sell out to the grid. Vice Chair Porter asked if this would be net metering or used on site. Ms. Callahan said it would be considered behind the meter solar. They would only have to pay a supplier and the utility for what they don't produce themselves. Mr. Cunningham said they are looking to own the field versus subbing it out so that they could get some dividends back. Ms. Callahan said an added benefit it this would create energy renewable certificates, which the County could then sell or use themselves. There was discussion about the RFP and developers that have reached out. There is a site walk planned for July 28th. Ms. Callahan mentioned that the County is in a supply contract for electricity that goes until December of 2023, so there is time to have everything done correctly. Chair Randall asked if the County also uses geothermal. Mr. Cunningham said yes, that is the primary heating and cooling use for the nursing home.

Mr. Cunningham also mentioned that they have recently put cattle back on the property and tripled their crops this year. These are supplied to the nursing home and jail, and helps subsidize food costs. There are also plans for a greenhouse to be put back on the property. Among these plans, they also plan to use ARPA funds to put a new roof on the old nursing home and install proper heating and cooling in all the wings, as well as a 100 car parking lot across from the building. These are all plans for potential growth if anyone in the future wanted to use the County's facilities. Mr. Cunningham would like to see the empty facilities be used productively instead of the space be wasted. The Committee had several questions about the proposed parking lot and empty buildings. There was discussion about potential future uses for this area. Mr. Cunningham also mentioned that the wastewater treatment plant requires maintenance, so the ARPA funds will be used to complete those renovations at the same time. That part of the project is scheduled for early fall into the winter.

Mr. Cunningham said the Commissioners at Merrimack County have set aside \$2 million for a grant opportunity for nonprofit organizations, towns, and cities to apply for. He predicts this will be available sometime in the fall. The application process is being created currently. Chair Randall thanked Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Callahan for coming to the meeting and all of the updates at the Merrimack County facilities.

UCONN Tab Program: Aaron Hinze introduced himself to the Committee. Mr. Hinze is working with the Brownfields Advisory Committee to create a community wide revitalization plan for multiple properties in town, including Commercial Street where the EPA Removal Program is currently working to remove mill buildings. He has been researching economic information, demographics, plan studies and town documents on the sites he was given throughout town.

Mr. Hinze had a few questions. He had been looking at the Agricultural Chapter of the Master Plan and noticed that a focus was to bring new agricultural businesses into town. He asked the Committee if this was still a goal. Vice Chair Porter, who is also Vice Chair of the Agricultural Commission, said yes this is still a main focus in town. The Committees and Commissions are available to help any potential businesses that want to come into Boscawen in any way that they can. Whether that be attending hearings, site visits or helping to find land that

will suit a specific need, these members are willing to help in any way to make the process go as smoothly as possible for potential businesses.

Mr. Hinze had a question about the where the Rail Trail ends before Commercial Street. Vice Chair Porter said there has been a purchase of land to connect the Rail Trail to that section of town and that connection is actively being worked on this summer.

Mr. Hinze asked the Committee if there were any new economic focuses for development in town. Vice Chair Porter said nothing specific, just whatever opportunities come their way. But the Committee tries to facilitate that once projects are proposed. PCD Director Easler told Mr. Hinze about a property owner on Commercial Street who would like to partner with the Water Precinct to get water to that area. She thinks it would be useful for Mr. Hinze to meet that owner. The Committee thanked Mr. Hinze for joining the meeting.

Old Business:

Economic Development Fair: Chair Randall spoke with the Boscawen Elementary School PTA and all are hopeful that the Craft Fair will be put on, which is scheduled for the first weekend in November although there are still many details that need to be finalized. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said last resort the Economic Development Fair could be held outside the school with vendors bringing their own pop-up tents and heaters, depending on the availability of electricity. She also recommended if the Craft Fair doesn't work out, the Parks and Rec Program is having a movie night on October 14th for a Halloween Movie Night for the kids. This is another event that the Fair could piggyback off of. Chair Randall asked Deputy PCD Director O'Brien if the volunteer table at Old Home Day had been approved. She said yes it had. Chair Randall suggested getting a business card from every business in Boscawen and having some kind of display at this table to showcase how many businesses Boscawen actually has. This could be a form of advertising for the Fair. Discussion ensued.

PBWP Update: Cheryl Mitchell could not attend the meeting but passed along the information that Nathan Young had been elected to become the Chair of the Water Precinct Commission. Mr. Tardiff said he spoke with Bill Murphy and he sent over the 1972 plan for the water lines to Commercial Street. Discussion ensued. Mr. Tardiff said he would reach out to the Precinct and suggested that some of the Committee attend their next meeting. Several Committee and staff members agreed to attend the July 27th meeting. PCD Deputy Director O'Brien will ask to be added to the agenda.

Municipal Transportation Tax: Mr. Tardiff asked Vincent Pagano to make a Transportation Improvement Fee FAQ sheet for the Committee. He also included examples of warrant articles from agricultural towns that are similar to Boscawen. There are currently 23 towns that have adopted this fee. Mr. Pagano mentioned questions that had been brought up previously were how this tax would affect farmers, and what vehicles would this affect. He said this tax would be applied to farming vehicles, but it would all come down to what the town would choose to charge. Mr. Pagano discussed what some other towns have used this tax for, examples being some used the money for anything that is stated in RSA 261:153 VI, while others were focused on using the money to revitalize a downtown area, fix crosswalks to not have fading paint or

adding bike lanes. This tax would have to be brought to Town Meeting in a warrant article to be adopted, or rescinded after adoption. Mr. Tardiff said other than antique vehicles and ATVs, there is no waiver process. All other vehicles would have this tax applied at registration. Vice Chair Porter asked if there was a maximum per household. Mr. Tardiff said no there is not. Town Administrator Phelps asked if there is a time limit on when the funds need to be used by. Mr. Pagano said no, the funds would only have to be placed in that Capital Reserve Fund and would have to be spent on those items as stated in the RSA. Chair Randall asked Vice Chair Porter what he thinks the Agricultural Commission would have to say about the tax. He said that even though he is for the tax, he is concerned about how the Agricultural community would be affected. Most households only register two or three vehicles at most while farms could register up to twenty or more. Chair Randall would like Vice Chair Porter bring this topic to the next Agricultural Commission meeting to get the input of those members.

Other Business:

EDC Meeting Invite Letter: PCD Deputy Director O'Brien drafted a letter to send out to businesses in town to invite them to attend an EDC meeting. She said if all were in agreement with this letter that she would start to send them out and asked if there were any businesses the Committee would like to send this letter to first. She also mentioned that the Energy Committee would like to see if the EDC would like to reach out to certain businesses in town to see if they would be interested in placing EV chargers at those locations. The Energy Committee would be open to partnering with the EDC on this and are open to having a joint meeting to discuss. Mr. Tardiff will bring more information about EV chargers if a joint meeting is planned. Discussion ensued. Ex Officio Carey would like Kentek to be invited to a meeting. PCD Deputy Director O'Brien mentioned that Kentek offered to do a tour for the Fire Department and could potentially offer the same invitation to the Committee if contacted.

The next meeting will be held on August 1st, 2022.

Vice Chair Porter motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Ex Officio Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.