

**Town of Boscawen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 7th, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.**

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

Members Excused: Mason Donovan

Members Absent: Caroletta Alicea

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: Vincent Pagano—Central NH Regional Planning Commission and Brandee Loughlin—Preservation Planning & Development Coordinator of NH Division of Historical Resources

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

PCD Assistant Gallagher completed roll call.

Minutes:

Vice Chair Porter motioned to accept the 08.01.22 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Ex Officio Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

New Business:

NH Division of Historical Resources Federal Historic Tax Credit: Mrs. Loughlin is the Preservation Planning and Development Coordinator of the NH Division of Historical Resources. Her office is located within New Hampshire's state historic preservation office. Mrs. Loughlin manages two programs, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program, which is the reason for her attendance of this meeting, and the Certified Local Government Program which is in partnership with the National Park Service. Mrs. Loughlin explained the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program at this time. This program allows for a credit equaling 20% of the qualifying expenses per project, which is to be taken over 5 years after the project is complete. This is a credit directly off of the taxes owed. It is not a deduction. Buildings that are rehabilitated under this program have to be income producing buildings and

have a tax liability, as well as the ownership entity has to have a tax liability in order to get a tax credit. Some non-profit businesses can utilize this program by partnering with a for-profit entity. Buildings must be eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places in order to qualify for this program. There are three parts to the application. Part one of the application is determining if the building is eligible for listing if it is not already listed. If it is not already listed, NHDHR requests that the applicant submit a completed State Inventory form in order for staff to determine an opinion on the property's eligibility for listing in the National Register. Part two is review of the current conditions of the property, the proposed work, and how it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The application must include current photographs, description of work, any drawings, plans etc. for exterior and interior work. Once part two is complete, NHDHR will complete their review and let the applicant know if any changes should be made before it is sent to the National Park Service for requested approval. Once the applicant has completed the rehabilitation work to the specifications approved by the National Park Service, they should submit a Request for Certification of Completed Work to NHDHR, which is step three. This step of the application documents that the completed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and includes mostly photographs of the completed work. NHDHR will review the application, may or may not request a site visit, and sends it on to the National Park Service with their recommendations. Once approved by the National Park Service, the application can then begin to claim the 20% income tax credit. It is strongly recommended that any applicant contact the NHDHR office before beginning any work to ensure all of the proposed work will meet the required standards. Mr. Tardiff asked if an applicant could list a building to the National Register of Historic Places on their own. Mrs. Loughlin said generally no, the NHDHR recommends hiring a consultant to help with the process. She said the State Inventory form is supposed to be accessible but that isn't always the case. Chair Randall asked if this incentive is a one-time credit. Mrs. Loughlin said yes, but after the credit is paid out over the 5 years and it could be justified, you could apply for the credit all over again for the same building. NHDHR has been seeing projects that have been done years previously come back for another credit. There are restrictions that come with this program, including owning and maintaining the property for 5 years after the project is completed. If the property is sold within those 5 years it is subject to recapture. If any additional work or changes are made to the property within the 5 years, the applicant would have to apply for approval from the National Park Service. Some recent projects that have used this tax incentive include the Colonial Theater in Laconia totaling \$17 million, the Hilltop School in Somersworth totaling \$4 million, the Newmarket Manufacturing Co. in Newmarket totaling almost \$24 million, and the Lower Interval Grange in Plymouth totaling \$150,000. Mr. Tardiff asked how long the application review takes. Mrs. Loughlin said when she receives an application she has 30 days to deliver a response. The National Park Service in theory has 30 days but in the past couple of years it has taken longer, closer to 45-60 days, to receive a response which usually wasn't an approval or a denial but a request for more information. Mrs. Randall asked if this credit can be used in conjunction with any other tax incentive programs. Mrs. Loughlin said yes, there are no restrictions on pairing this program with other funding sources, for example 79D and 79E. The EDC thanked Mrs. Loughlin for her time.

2023 Harvest Festival Proposal: Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said this was an idea she would like to bring to the Agricultural Commission for next year but would like to first receive input from the EDC. This day would be tentatively set for October 14th, 2023. This would allow for fair season, Old Home and Columbus Day weekend to be completed. This could be an opportunity to partner with Merrimack County 4-H and maybe have some animals there, as well as business vendors, which could involve the EDC Fair. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien proposed different events and activities to draw people in such as make your own scarecrow, pumpkin bowling, potato sack races, a pumpkin ring toss, food contests and more. She also proposed a pumpkin carving contest in which a list of local vendors would be provided where pumpkins could be purchased, carved at home and then brought to the festival for judging. Residents could be asked to place a battery operated candle inside their pumpkin and they could all be lit that night. There could be a scavenger hunt as well with the scarecrows on the Rail Trail as a way to involve The Friends of The Northern Rail Trail. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien suggested keeping this as local as possible with vendors such as the restaurants but also trying to incorporate the newer businesses such as the new brewery if that would be allowed. This event would end with the Parks & Rec 3rd Annual Movie Night which has so far had great turnouts. This would be a great way for multiple Committees to work together to make a large event happen instead of having multiple events throughout the fall. Discussion ensued about what the EDC thought about this event. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien will bring this to AgComm and let the EDC know what they think.

Welcoming New Businesses to Town Discussion: It was determined that new residents receive a "welcome bag" when coming into the town office for the first time, and the EDC would like to do something similar for new businesses. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked the EDC if there were any ideas for what could be done to help welcome new businesses to town. So far she has only sent out letters to invite businesses to an EDC meeting so they may address any concerns or ask any questions they may have. She also puts a post on Facebook once she has permission from the owner. Vice Chair Porter suggested sending an invitation to a new business as being a feature at an EDC meeting. Ex Officio Carey suggested compiling local business cards to add to a "business welcome bag" so that new businesses will be able to see what Boscawen has to offer. Chair Randall suggested doing a "welcome page" in the Town Report. Discussion ensued about new businesses in town.

Old Business:

Economic Development Fair: Chair Randall spoke with Andrew Bolduc the Executive Director of the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum who just put on their first Craft Fair. Chair Randall went to the fair to get ideas for the Economic Development Fair. She said it seemed very successful with 35 vendors in attendance. She was given a few pointers as to how to make the EDC's fair successful as well, which included having music and food, or something to draw people in. Mr. Bolduc said he would be willing to speak with the EDC, but as it was their first year doing this fair they are trying to gather information on what did and did not work. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said it seems like this fair would be better off in 2023. Chair Randall agreed because the Boscawen Elementary School PTO will not be meeting about the Craft Fair until the last

Tuesday in September for the fair to be the first weekend in November. She feels that won't leave enough time to plan and get vendors for the fair.

Municipal Transportation Tax: Chair Randall and Deputy PCD Director O'Brien brought this topic to the Planning Board on September 6th. The Board voted on recommending the Municipal Transportation Tax to the Select Board in a 4-2 vote.

Other Business:

ERZ District: Mr. Pagano has been working on adding a few new properties to the ERZ District. 193, 195, and 197 North Main Street have all been added, equaling 67 acres. Mr. Pagano said as far as he knows, this is ready to move forward to present to the Select Board, and once approved go on to 2023 Town Meeting. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said these properties were chosen because they were underdeveloped and underutilized.

The next meeting will be held on October 3rd, 2022.

Mrs. Sanborn motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Ex Officio Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.