



Town Of Webster
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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Economic Development Committee

Sharon McMahon, Chairwoman

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**Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes – August 6, 2018**

A meeting of the Economic Development Committee was held in the Irene Martel Meeting Room in Webster Town Hall on August 6, 2018, 2018. Town Administrator Doug Willardson called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Present from the Committee: Nancy Healy, Don Bourque; Town Administrator Doug Willardson (ex officio), Director of Planning and Economic Development Ann Morgan (ex officio) and Director of Community Development / Webster Redevelopment Authority Carol Cyr (ex officio).

Also Present: Carole Marchand

1. Pledge of Allegiance - Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. It was noted that no quorum was present and that the Committee would only review agenda items but take no action.
2. **Review Organization and Selectmen Appointees** – Mr. Willardson noted that there was no new information since the last meeting.
3. **Review Economic Development Plan** – Mr. Willardson distributed Section 4 – Economic Development of the 2014 Master Plan. He asked that people familiarize themselves with the document and it can be discussed for action items or updates at a later meeting. Ms. Morgan noted that this section can also be found on the Economic Development Committee webpage.
4. **Follow Up on New Business Outreach** – Committee members reviewed their outreach efforts to local businesses. Ms. Marchand noted that she spoke with someone representing Outside the Box and asked them about their experience in working with the Town as a business owner. Positive feedback was received and they noted that all their interactions with Town staff was agreeable and that people were very helpful. Ms. Cyr noted that she had received a similar response from Giguere's Trampoline. They are working to get program information to the local schools and have had success with the parish schools. They haven't had any luck with coordinating with the public schools and would like some assistance. Mr. Willardson noted that he had received similar good reviews from Big Belly and one of the local computer repair companies. One Stop Basketball had no comments when asked. Ms. Marchand noted that The Vacuum Store provided good reviews but has some issues regarding a recent bid which was not related to the work of the Committee.

Mr. Willardson noted that Town staff participate in bi weekly Development Team meetings. People interested in developing a project can meet informally with the Team to discuss the various requirements and provide feedback to guide future applicants. This has been helpful to all. Going forward there will be notes taken at these meetings to assist all. He also noted that he had attended the grand opening of the new furniture store on Main Street which took place just before the tornado hit a few blocks away. He's


spoken with the business owner since who has indicated that business is going as expected in that July is typically slow but that things were going well.

Mr. Willardson noted that he would like to work with the Webster Times in developing a regular business spotlight feature all types of business in town – new and existing. Nancy Healy suggested that the Town reach out to the Yankee Express as well. The idea of a brochure and web content was further discussed and it was agreed that work on these items should continue apace. It was suggested that the Town reach out to Nichols College to see if we could find an intern interested in assisting Town staff and the Committee in various projects.

5. **Discuss Plans to Improve the Perception of Webster** – Mr. Willardson noted that he had received an email from Chairwoman McMahon outlining her thoughts on improvements that could be made along Main Street. The Committee reviewed the email. He noted that these items would be discussed at the next regularly scheduled meeting. He also reviewed some ideas regarding the Town Hall sign structure located at the corner of Main Street and Church street on the front lawn of Town Hall. The structure is deteriorating and needs repairs. A traditional announcement board vs. and electronic board for the insert was discussed. It was noted that an electronic sign may not comply with the Zoning By-Law. The Committee had a discussion about the merits of each as they relate to improving the visual environment of the historic downtown. Mr. Bourque noted that it was important for the Committee and the Town to improve the perception of Webster by promoting public works projects, façade improvements and signage that show an increasing vibrancy and diverse business environment. The perception can change if the Town as a clear vision as to how to achieve these goals. Ms. Morgan noted this type of branding could be done as part of a public outreach / participation effort to set the goals and promote a clear vision.
6. **Follow up on Potential Sites for NOAH** – Mr. Willardson noted that NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, Inc.) had reached out to him seeking potential project ideas. NOAH had worked with the Town to develop the Sitkowski School Apartments project. More review of potential sites would be required.
7. Any other business that may come legally before the Committee – None.
8. Next Meeting – to be determined.
9. **Adjournment**
The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- Item 5: Email from Sharon McMahon, re: Brochure, dated July 31, 2018; 1 page.



Sharon McMahon, Chairwoman



Date