

TOWN OF WATERBORO

Economic Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 30, 2009, 4:30 to 6 p.m.
Waterboro Town Hall Annex

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 p.m. by President, Chris Binette.

ROLL CALL

Chris Binette, Tom Ursia, TammyJo Girard, Kerry DeAngelis, Sue Rocray, Doug Foglio, Dianne Holden, Steve Eveld and Selectman Jon Gale (guest).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 4/23/09 were approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Visitor, Jon Gale, mentioned running into Mr. And Mrs. Dennis from Deer Pond Fuel who are trying to opening a fish market, and are frustrated. They told him the troubles they are having with town hall, month after month and how it is holding up their opening. Gale wonders if this is a display of the “non-business friendliness” people speak of? He suggested an operations piece to set forth instructions for opening a business. Currently there are no clear operations in town hall to help guide a new business starting up.

Chris Binette mentioned it was a great point that we've already been talking about for a while...A guide to help people through the process. Leo Binette had brought up developing a guide that gives the process from start to finish with tracking and documentation. Gale said people at town hall aren't intentionally being unfriendly.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Economic Development Mission

Chris referred to the mission statement that was distributed at the previous meeting. He wanted everyone to read and make sure they were happy with it and that changes didn't need to be made. Chris pointed out the second paragraph and wanted to make sure the Comprehensive Plan mention was ok?

Tom Ursia interjected to mention that updates will be being made to the Comprehensive Plan and maybe the mission can be altered to say current and future updated. Tom also said that the Comprehensive Plan currently lacks economic development and village planning.

Kerry DeAngelis mentioned that even if updates are made to the Comprehensive Plan, we would then follow that, so it's understood.

Chris said we are due for revisiting the Comprehensive Plan. Since we are going to try and help plan with strategies to bring in local jobs, the current plan was written in a very different economy.

Dianne Holden asked Tom if we could work simultaneously and can we make suggestions to the Comprehensive Plan as a committee?

Tom said if we follow the state guidelines, there should be a constant Comprehensive Plan review committee. He also said that there should be a whole chapter on energy planning and Waterboro could be the first town in the state to have it. We have 5 potential villages and no village planning. He said there is a lot of work to be done and that the Economic Development chapter should be written in-house, by this committee, working with the Planning Board and BOS. He assumes the Comprehensive Plan will be one of our goals.

Dianne said we will likely be making suggestions and directing things all over, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Board, Planning Board, etc.

Jon Gale said the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee has died out but suggested this committee comes up with an Economic Development plan.

Doug Foglio said he read through the Comprehensive Plan and it would be very simple to correct the mission statement. He suggested adding the words "recommend changes that" will be focused on... Adding this would give this committee the ability to make recommendations. Gives us latitude to operate.

Doug said that in the past, the town would not put money to sidewalks even though the Comprehensive Plan said it should. He said the Comprehensive Plan said the town should offer tax incentives but that didn't happen either.

Sue Rocray mentioned removing last paragraph on the mission statement page, referencing the make up of the committee...shouldn't really be part of the Mission.

Everyone voted unanimously to make the updated revisions to submit to the Selectmen. TammyJo Girard reminded that we'd have to get on the BOS agenda and have them approve it.

NEW BUSINESS

Talking Points for potential list of goals

Chris mentioned the talking points list that was distributed, which was created from comments made at the last meeting. He said it was important to prioritize.

Doug mentioned that everyone should have a copy of the Zoning Ordinance in regards to "Improving the Town's Image." He said the Zoning Ordinance defines the CEO's job, which is to approve and deny building permits. He said the BOS has not made the corrections to the Zoning Ordinance that they should and used Tom as an example. The Zoning ordinance should direct people to Tom but there is no mention of a Town Planner. Doug said that changes should have been made a year ago and now we've gone all of this time with conflict. A lot of work has been put on the CEO that is not called for. The site plan review should not be in the CEO's office. Structure should not be looked at by Site Plan Review. He said Tom has zero authority and Doug objects to that. Doug said the first thing to do is correct Zoning Ordinance so the plans created go to the correct office or person. The Zoning Ordinance says that Site Plan Review should go to the CEO, but it

should say to go to the Town Planner AND CEO. He said it is town planner's job to review plans with the exception of codes.

Chris related it back to the need for creating a guide or structured list of operations for a new business starting up. Part of the direction is to make sure that plans go to the CEO and Town planner BEFORE the go to the Planning Board.

Doug said Planning Board is supposed to be a review board. Said it is not their job to interpret building codes or determine septic system design.

Chris said we will get copies of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review for everyone to read through and understand so we can make educated recommendations.

Tom said he'd get copies of those, plus a Site Plan Review Checklist that has been recently created. Tom said that what Doug said was true. We need to strive for efficiency and to facilitate.

TammyJo mentioned holding a workshop between the Town Planner, the CEO and the Planning Board to get things clear. Jon Gale suggested that Doug and Tom sit down and in two hours, between the two of them, they would probably have everything streamlined. Then the EDC can make a proposal to the Planning Board and BOS.

Kerry mentioned developing the Economic Development plan for the town before attacking a goal list, or at least make it one of the goals.

Tom mentioned having a list of goals is important and which are short-term and long-term and those terms need to be defined. We need a sense of order. All of the pieces will then become the plan.

Steve Eveld said Doug's points are things we are going to run into. When we come across an issue like this, we can then address it. Keep in mind the vision of what we are doing. The list of goals is our vision.

Tom made some suggestions: Are you all happy with this list? Is anything missing? Tom said we should add what TammyJo had mentioned regarding exploring grants.

Kerry mentioned that "image" could be seen two ways. The town's "public image" would refer to what people are saying or feeling about the town, where or the "physical image" would refer to signage, buildings and landscaping.

Tom said improving town's image is an on-going goal. Signs are a doable short-term goal. Selectmen are going to want to see progress on this committee. Said we do have two image issues. Part of our image is about how we treat people. Customer service is important. That's how we build our product. Our payback is a happy customer.

Tom mentioned a group that wanted to open a funeral home. They were bewildered when they walked into Town Hall but after a couple hours they were looking for land in town. Thought we should add customer service.

Chris wrote down Short-term actions on the board.

1. GRANTS: Said grants should be a short-term goal. Assigned TammyJo and Kerry to research available grants by end of summer, so we are ahead of the game.

2. WELCOME SIGNS:

Doug said there should be money in the Conservation Commission which was intended for signs. Kerry asked about previous sign proposal. Tom said a man had volunteered some time to create signs. He will bring sketches to the next meeting. Tom suggested having one prototype sign ready by Thanksgiving. Steve and Kerry were put on the task.

3. BUILD A MORE ATTRACTIVE & AESTHETIC TOWN ENVIRONMENT...

Cleaning up properties along town inlets with CEO, trash, falling down buildings, etc. Leo was put on this task.

Doug said we need a think list of people's thoughts people can refer to. TammyJo suggested at the end of every meeting we do a roundtable of people's think lists.

4. RESEARCH TOP 20 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN MAINE: Tom will have for the May 28th meeting.

Tom said him and Doug would have an outline of their Zoning Ordinance changes at the May 28th meeting.

TammyJo asked for the Downtown grant project to be on the next agenda.

REMINDERS:

Next meeting May 14 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Waterboro Town Hall Annex.
Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kerry DeAngelis, EDC Secretary