

# ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES  
November 23, 2015  
6:30 pm  
Ashland Fire Station

## **Steering Committee Members Present**

Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox (Planning Board ex-officio), Steve Felton (BOS ex-officio)

## **Steering Committee Members Absent**

Benoit Lamontagne

## **Ad Hoc Committee Members Present**

David Toth (Water & Sewer Commissioner), Kathleen DeWolfe (Conservation Commission)

## **Ad Hoc Committee Members Absent**

Scott Stephens (Central NH Chamber of Commerce), Jae Demers, Eli Badger (Housing Standards Board), Lee Nichols, Superintendent (Ashland Electric Department)

## **Others present**

Norm DeWolfe, Fran Newton, Ray Mason (Mason Enterprise)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chairperson MacLeod.

## **Meeting Minutes**

Susan made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of October 26 and the motion was seconded by Steve Felton. Cheryl was not present at the meeting and abstained. The minutes were accepted.

## **Sub-committee Overview**

Ray Mason, a long time Ashland resident and the owner of Mason Enterprise attended the meeting. His business information was added to the recently published Facebook page for the AEDC, Destination: Ashland and that is how he became aware of the Ashland Economic Development Committee.

An overview of the committee and sub-committees were given. For the Marketing sub-committee, Cheryl shared information about the business meet and greet that took place in Sept. and the follow-up meetings related to Christmas Night in Ashland. She also shared how the Facebook page was recently published to help communicate what the AEDC is trying to do. Fran Newton, also shared the goals of the Marketing sub-committee are to market Ashland as a great place to live and work, to support current business and engage them in the process of economic development, and encourage new businesses to come to Ashland.

Susan shared how the Asset Mapping sub-committee is cataloging the commercial properties in town and including information such as description, square footage and/or acreage, potential uses, does it have water and/or sewer, etc. which can be shared with anyone who may be interested. Commercial properties could be advertised on the NH Department of Economic Development web site.

Steve described how the GIS steering committee is working to digitize tax maps and make all information about each property more accessible. There has been a lot of progress made and some research is being done on ways to best utilize the system. Information from various databases, such as Grafton County, have been added. A meeting will be scheduled in the first quarter of 2016 to share the project status.

### **Water and Sewer**

David Toth discussed the use of GIS mapping by Water and Sewer. They were the first to use GIS mapping. They have completed the mapping of the entire system which is critical to asset management. They have also been very active in applying for grant money. They have had discussions with the town of Holderness about extending the Ashland sewer lines into Holderness along Route 3. Holderness is currently looking into the feasibility of this project. Out of those meetings came additional discussions about sharing other resources.

### **Zoning Amendment**

The Planning Board is working on an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would discourage store fronts on Main Street from being converted into apartments.

### **Potential 2016 Projects**

A discussion on efforts to make the town look more attractive and inviting included the possibility of a "Welcome to Ashland" sign. In addition, signs for visiting the lower village, Memorial Park and others with similar coloring and design would give a unified look. The Marketing sub-committee will look into cost and feasibility.

Ashland has a rich and varied history. Promoting the Reuben Whitten project the other historical buildings in town and their history can help promote Ashland as a great place to live and work.

### **General Discussion**

The town is in the process of having a Brownfields II assessment done on one of the mill properties. This will open up the possibility for grant money to improve that property. There are five different owners of the mill building. The hope is that owners of the other buildings would see the benefits of improving the buildings they own.

A general discussion took place about Whitten Woods and the anticipation of how it will help the local economy and hopefully draw businesses related to recreation to town.

Ray Mason shared some of his experiences in running a business in town and expressed his thoughts on ways to help out the local economy. The AEDC is in need of local business owners on the committee and he was asked to send an email to the Board of Selectmen if interested in becoming a committee member.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

The next meeting will be held on **Monday, December 28, 2015 at 6:30 pm** at the Ashland Fire Station, ***unless notified otherwise***.

*Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox*