

# ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

March 31, 2015

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

### **Steering Committee Members Present**

Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox (Planning Board ex-officio), Steve Felton (Board of Selectmen ex-officio), Beno Lamontagne

### **Absent without Notice**

Jill White

### **Ad Hoc Committee Members Present**

Lee Nichols, Superintendent (Ashland Electric Department), Scott Stephens (Plymouth Regional Chamber of Commerce)

### **Others present**

Paul Branscombe, Norm DeWolfe, Kathleen DeWolfe, Mardean Badger, Eli Badger, Jae Demers, Fran Newton, David Toth

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Chairperson MacLeod.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Steve Felton made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 19 meeting. Susan MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

### **EDA Grant Application**

Steve Felton reviewed the requirements when applying for an EDA grant to create an economic development plan for Ashland. The grant application defines several categories for the types of grants being applied for. The application consists of 40 plus pages. We are not yet ready to begin the application process as we need to better define the priorities and the scope of the project. Applying for these grants may be done quarterly. Steve provided a handout he put together (**See attachment 1**) to begin outlining the key principles and areas to consider for the type of grant we will be seeking.

Brian Ward from Littleton will be invited to attend the May AEDC meeting and will be asked to provide a sample grant application.

### **Land Available**

A discussion took place on the first principle relating to “land available and best use options for that land”. Ideally, we should be able to communicate to potential business owners/operators the properties available and all the details related to each property. It is increasingly apparent that GIS mapping of all available properties in town will be crucial to moving forward with economic development. Without a readily available, descriptive listing of available properties it will be difficult to engage potential business owners/operators. Some discussion took place about the 26+/- acres site of the old paper mill off of Winter Street.

### Parking

The lack of parking in town continues to be a concern. There is an ongoing discussion about the possibility of the American Legion parking lot being utilized. Lee Nichols shared several suggestions to increase or improve the parking situation.

### GIS Update

The pilot program for GIS mapping of tax maps was due to be available the end of March. However, there seems to have been little progress. Steve Felton will meet with Michelle Roberts tomorrow to determine the status of the project. Paul Branscombe and Patsy Tucker will begin to manually develop a listing of available properties.

### Jae Demers Brochure

The brochure Jae put together (**See Attachments 2A&B**) has been made available at all to most businesses in town and other locations. It has already generated interest in the properties available in town.

### Sub-committees

A discussion took place on assets of the town that could be used in a marketing campaign to bring new business in. It was agreed that “quality of life” aspects such as the beach, the ballfield, proximity to PSU, etc. as well as I-93 access need to be part of such a campaign. We need to do some work before we can actively begin such a campaign, therefore it was decided that the following three sub-committees will be established.

Each lead will set up a meeting for their sub-committee. No posted meeting times or minutes will be needed for these sub-committees.

<b>Sub-committee</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Members</b>
Land Available	Susan MacLeod	Paul Branscombe, Lee Nichols, Eli Badger
GIS	Steve Felton	Norm DeWolfe, Eli Badger, Michelle Roberts
Marketing	Cheryl Cox	Lee Nichols, Fran Newton, Jae Demers, Jill White

### Existing Ashland Businesses

We need to continue communication with Ashland business owners to identify and assist with their needs. It would also be very beneficial to have business owners on the committee. The best way to go about getting business owners involved has been discussed and may need to be an additional sub-committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

The next meeting will be held on **April 27, 2015 at 6:30 pm** at the Ashland Fire Station, *unless notified otherwise*.

*Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox*