

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

March 29, 2016

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Steering Committee Members Present

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

Steering Committee Members Absent

Beno Lamontagne, Steve Felton (BOS Board ex-officio)

Ad Hoc Committee Members Present Lee Nichols, Superintendent (Ashland Electric Department)

David Toth (Water & Sewer Commissioner), Jae Demers,

Others present

Fran Newton, Anthony Adamsky and Max Corbett, co-owners of the Quince & Quail at 25 Main Street

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

Northern Pass Intervenor Status

David Toth gave an overview of the status of the Northern Pass intervenor process. The purpose is to allow affected parties to intervene in the legal process. They are allowed to go to trial and plead their case. There are several groups in town that applied for this status. The process can obviously get expensive when legal representation is hired. In addition, Ashland has been grouped with eight other towns from Ashland to Deerfield, including Concord. Only one representative for the group is allowed to speak and ask questions. Only fifty questions will be allowed per group. Ashland Water and Sewer had developed twenty-five questions alone. Water and Sewer has petitioned to remain independent from a group. They are going to request that the towers do not go through the town's well field or the lagoon area. The current plan has the towers going over the town's test wells and very close to the lagoons. The concern is that the lagoons are lined with clay and construction in the area would damage the lagoons. There are additional concerns with access and security. Not much direction was given on how to move forward with organizing the group to present their concerns. David has sent a letter to the other representatives in the group to begin the process.

Marketing Sub-committee

The Marketing group is focusing on a "Welcome to Ashland" sign and ways to raise the necessary funds. The goal is to start with a sign off the highway and then signs with similar a design entering from Holderness, at Memorial Park and other areas in town. Several suggestions for funding and grants were discussed.

Thank you to Jae Demers for putting together a brochure of the vacant commercial properties in town. The committee will contact the Enterprise Center, a business incubator in Plymouth, to see if they are working with anyone who may be looking for a location. Chris Wellington, head of the Enterprise Center will be invited to a future AEDC meeting.

General Discussion

Anthony Adamsky's father has purchased 44 Main Street, the old Ashland Insurance building. He is working with Samyn-D'Elia to update the building.

The Fourth of July committee is looking for pictures and videos to promote Ashland to be displayed on the stage at the celebration. Pictures of past Fourth of July celebrations or sites in town are of most interest. Any help from photographers, videographers or project coordination would be much appreciated. Interested parties should send an email to aedc@ashland.nh.gov.

The following email was received by AEDC:

From: [Juliet Harvey <pbtv@plymouth-nh.org>](mailto:pbtv@plymouth-nh.org)

What: Pemi Baker TV Station will be filming **NEWS FROM NON-PROFITS** next month and we would like your group to share their message and news with the Plymouth area.

Why: The Plymouth community wants to meet their local non-profit groups and know more about their activities and upcoming events.

When: Wednesday, April 20th starting at 10:00 a.m.

Where: Pemi Baker TV Studio at the Pease Public Library, Plymouth

Lee Nichols and Beno Lamontagne are working with Samyn-D'Elia on a proposal to update the Booster Club and potential grant money available for the project.

The Heritage Commission did a report on the Whipple House. They are planning to do such a report on all the historical buildings in town. The Historical Society leases the Whipple House as their headquarters. There has not been a curator for several years and visitation is very low. The Commission is looking at best use of the buildings in town going forward.

The long standing topic of signage directing traffic to the lower village was discussed. There are several issues with the island in this area and Heather Thibodeau, Town Administrator is looking into if signs would be allowed and what types of state approvals would be needed.

Cheryl Cox attended the Lakes Region Planning Commissioners meeting held on March 28. NHDOT Commissioner Victoria Sheehan was the guest speaker. She talked about the Federal Highway Act and the Fast Lane program. There are Surface Transportation block grants available under the categories of Transportation Alternatives, Recreation Trails and Surface Transportation. The NH DOT will now consider the effects on travel and tourism when considering road improvement requests. It was also mentioned at the meeting that a town can request re-striping of a state road when it is being repaved by the state. All it requires is a request by the Board of Selectmen. Re-striping could create areas for walking or biking.

Ashland is currently working with NHDOT to improve parts of Highland Street. David Toth reported that the Ashland (TAC) Transportation Alternative Committee is looking into a Safe Routes to school planning grant. This would be for an engineering study to look at the issues with the island.

The question was asked if electric bills could be paid by credit card. It was reported that should have happened by now and the town treasurer should be contacted.

Design Standards

The Planning Board is working on design standards for commercial properties in town. An invitation to business owners and property owners of buildings on Main Street is being drafted. The purpose would be to discuss standards proportionally and architecturally pleasing and appropriate for the town and not be cost prohibitive for property owners. The standards would be added to the site plan regulations not the zoning regulations. This would allow for the most flexibility on a case by case basis.

Meeting Minutes

There was not a quorum at the February meeting so no meeting minutes were required. Approval of the January minutes was deferred to next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 26 @ 6:30 at the fire station.

Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox