

# ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 2016

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

### **Steering Committee Members Present**

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

### **Steering Committee Members Absent**

Beno Lamontagne

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

David Toth (Water & Sewer Commissioner), Jae Demers

### **Ad Hoc Committee Members Absent**

Lee Nichols, Superintendent (Ashland Electric Department)

### **Others present**

Fran Newton, Eli Badger, Mardean Badger, Harold Lamos

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by Chairperson MacLeod.

### **Re-Organization**

Susan MacLeod was nominated for chairperson by Steve Felton. It was seconded by Cheryl Cox. Cheryl Cox will continue as minute taker.

### **Ashland Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)**

David Toth gave a report on a recent meeting of the ATAC. The committee reviewed the proposal for the Thompson Street repair. They want to ensure all side streets and driveways off of Thompson Street are considered. They made some recommendations about the safety issues on N. Ashland Road based on cost. Signs and reflector posts were some recommendations. In the long term, shoulder expansion and guard rails may be needed but will involve a substantial cost. Next year the state will be doing cosmetic work to Winona Road. The committee will ask that the road be narrowed at Washington Street. This will help slow traffic down. It will also be requested that the shoulder on at least one side of the road be widened. This will create a safer walking area.

### **Northern Pass and Industrial/Commercial Zoned Land**

Due to the concerns with the Northern Pass project, the land affected has been scrutinized as of late. In the area of Cedar Lane, there is a 500 foot well radius protection area. Since 1996, the well field has been near this area which is designated as an industrial/commercial zone. The buildable land is very limited in this area. There would also need to be restrictions on the types of businesses allowed due to the proximity to the well area. The Planning Board may need to look at the zoning of this area.

### **Design Standards**

The Planning Board has been working on design standards for the town. It is agreed that building owners and business owners need to be engaged in this process. Design standards would be the first step if you would like to create a 79E tax incentive area. You would then define a discrete area to fall under the tax incentive program. With design controls in place for the downtown commercial business district, there would be guidance

for anyone wanting to do renovations in this area. A letter of invitation has been sent out to twenty-four business and/or property owners to discuss design standards at the Planning Board's work session on May 25.

### **General Discussion**

The properties at 25 and 51 Main Street have just been sold by the owner who purchased them about a year ago. The business at 51 Main Street has closed due to health issues. It is not known who purchased the properties. The Mobil station will be closing due to a red tag warning. It appears they cannot make the necessary repairs. The state liquor store in Ashland will be closing soon. There is a new store opening in New Hampton next week. Another is being built in Plymouth and is expected to be opening in the summer. The building is owned by the state and will be sold. Hopefully it won't be a long process as there may be some interest in it.

Jae Demers has put together a nice, updated brochure of properties available for sale or rent. It was discussed who should be listed as the contact person for anyone interested in an available property. It was agreed it should be the Town Administrator. Tax maps are on the GIS system and are currently available to the Town Administrator and the Town Clerk. There is more useful information that can be uploaded to the system that would be helpful for this purpose. Property cards in town office will need to be reviewed and updated for the most accurate information before it is added.

The grant application process was discussed. We need to clearly define one or more projects that we can move forward on. It is apparent that we need the assistance of a grant writer. There have been some grants written by several volunteers and those were well received but not always funded. There are many sources of grants and it would be very helpful to have someone who knows where to find available grants and can then write the applications.

The mill area continues to be of most interest as a viable project. There is some interest in the building that is in the Brownfield's process. An important step will be to bring the mill building owners together and begin the conversation about what can be done to make the best use of the area for the benefit of all. Steve Felton will contact the four known owners to arrange a meeting.

### **Whitten Woods**

There was a nice article in the Laconia Daily Sun about the Whitten Woods trails being open. The article was shared on the Destination:Ashland Facebook page and received a lot of attention.

### **LRPC Commissioner Meeting**

Cheryl Cox attended the recent LRPC meeting. The topic was invasive insects. The primary concern is the Emerald Ash Borer. Though it was stated at the meeting that they had not been found in Grafton County yet, Harold Lamos reported finding some on his property. He was advised to contact the appropriate organization to make them aware. It was recommended that the town inventory ash trees on town property in the event they become damaged and need to be cut down.

### **Meeting Minutes**

There was not a quorum at the March meeting so the minutes issued are considered notes and do not require official approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

**The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 31 @ 6:30 at the fire station.**

*Minutes submitted by Cheryl Cox*