

Somers Economic Development Commission

Minutes of November 2, 2015

1. Call to Order: Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. Members present: David Reed, Richard Cheney, Tim Potrikus, Bob Schmidt, Vicki Clark, and Sarah Maskill.
2. A motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 1, 2015 was made by Mr. Cheney, and seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion carried 6-0.
3. Chairman Reed reported no new correspondence.
4. Old business:
 - a. Ms. Clark reported that the committee's social media activity continues via Facebook posts.
 - b. Ms. Clark reported that no future business-after-hours events are currently scheduled.
 - c. Mr. Cheney reported that POCD meetings are not occurring.
5. New Business:
 - a. Tim Potrikus reported on the current activity of the Ad Hoc Committee for Strategic Planning of the Somersville Mill Site Cleanup. The group is nearly complete in its work as requested by the Board of Selectmen.
 - A copy of the engineering report is posted on the town website.
 - The committee has voted to authorize the chairman to make a recommendation to the full BOS. It is anticipated that the recommendation that will be sent to the BOS for consideration will include the following:
 - That the town pursue a grant by November 16, 2015 from the State of Connecticut for remediation of the site, and that the town consider applying for an additional grant for planning.
 - The planning grant is primarily for urban cleanup zones of multiple properties, and limited funding is available state-wide. If the planning grant in any way compromises our ability to compete for the remediation grant, it would be advisable for the town to aggressively pursue the remediation grant on its own.
 - There is a limit of \$4MM per town in the remediation grant; early estimates for remediation of the mill site is not definite, but well below the cap.
 - The grant application should include but not necessarily be limited to:
 - Cleanup and removal of debris on the site and in the Scantic watershed.
 - An engineering study to consider the feasibility of retaining any historic or desirable structures on the property, including basement walls and remaining mill structures on the north side of the Scantic River.
 - Removal of soil to a depth that allows for the installation of a warning barrier and clean soil, creating a site that is remediated to standards that allow for future use and development consistent with the expected future use(s) of the site.
 - A recap of the site history
 - A recap of efforts by the town, including stakeholders such as neighbors, the mill cleanup committee, town historian, town commissions (planning, zoning, EDC), and engineering departments. The recap should illustrate the town's desire to work in unison to create a restored site.
 - That the town consider working with Planning and Zoning to create a Planned Development District that would encompass the mill site and adjoining properties to the Northwest to include the Somersville Post

Office, and to the Northeast to encompass the properties at the corner of Maple and School Street, and to the Northeast on the opposite side of School Street to encompass the Mill Pond Park north to include the former Somersville School site.

- Planned Development Districts are common in the State of Connecticut, and create a use district that allows for flexible development while providing the municipality with a high degree of oversight prior to authorizing any specific development. Development projects are afforded expedited approvals through other municipal boards and or agencies once the overall development plan is accepted by the appropriate town authorities.
- There is much more to a Planned Development District than can be covered in this overview; however, the town would have the authority to limit the type of development (mixed use, light commercial, recreational), size and scope of any site improvements including structures, and the ability to have discretion in architectural styles, setbacks, building dimensions, and property use.
- That the town pursues taking title to the mill site from its current owners through appropriate means.
- The process of ownership will likely include the owner's right to redemption of any action by the town for a period of six (6) months. This means that while grants may be pursued or even awarded sooner than 6 months, the town would not likely begin any substantive work on the site until such redemption period expires.
- That the town, upon receiving clear title and upon executing its formal remediation plan, solicits Request for Proposal offers from developers interested in developing the property, consistent with any Planned Development District expectations that the town may develop.
- The goal of redevelopment of the site will be as a cornerstone to the Planned Development District, affording commercial development in an area served by public utilities including water and wastewater disposal. The mill site itself would be redeveloped to ensure the sites historic significance to Somers and Somersville is respectfully maintained; that the sites unique access to the Scantic River and the Scantic River Linear State Park allows for future public recreational access.
- The mill committee encourages the EDC to use its resources to begin thinking about a plan for marketing the mill site and any contiguous Planned Development District that may be approved by the town in the near future.
- The mill site itself is on a 2-3 year track for the remediation process, and a longer horizon for ultimate final development. However, with support from the State, from local stakeholders, and with the support of the community, noticeable improvements in the safety and appearance of the mill site is attainable within the next 12 - 18 months.

Chairman Reed made a motion for the EDC to support the filing of these grants. Ms. Maskill seconded the motion; the motion carried 6-0.

- b. Chairman Reed facilitated a review of the EDC's 2015 activities to include in the Annual Report.
- c. Chairman Reed facilitated a review of the EDC Objectives and Goals of 2015. Ms. Maskill will update the Objectives and Goals document to add two new items:
 - Gigabit Internet Initiative
 - Active Role in marketing for the Mill site and any contiguous Planned Development District that may be approved by the Town
- d. Rick Cheney discussed the creation of a town flag. Mr. Cheney made a motion to add this item, the Gigabit internet initiative, and marketing for the mill site to the EDC's 2016 Objectives and Goals. Ms. Clark seconded the motion, the motion carried 6-0.

6. Chairman Reed confirmed the date of the next EDC meeting on December 7, 2015.
7. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Cheney and seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion carried 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:14.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Maskill

Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.