

MINUTES of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
April 1, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m.

Committee Members present:

Councilor Paul Goodwin, Chairman
Councilor Richard R. Michaud, Vice Chair
Councilor Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro
Councilor Robert Gibson

Staff Members present:

City Manager, Bob Belmore
Deputy City Clerk, Ammy Ramsey

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Goodwin at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2024

Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro made a motion to accept the April 1, 2024 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson and passed 4-0.

CITY-OWNED VACANT PARCEL AT 1 WINTER STREET

Councilor Goodwin spoke about the public forum that was held on April 11, 2024 regarding the potential use for the property located at 1 Winter Street. Councilor Goodwin stated there were approximately six or seven people in attendance and that they discussed three options which included a parking lot, open space, and a small development. He mentioned that there was not one option that everyone preferred over another and they all have their challenges. Open space or a parking lot was favorable but those options would be costly to the City and require long term maintenance. The Committee also discussed the potential issues that could arise concerning the monitoring wells, and the contaminated soil as it related to those options. Councilor Goodwin mentioned that there were no objections to a 6-unit housing development but the complications of doing a small development would be the sewer line location, and the small property footprint. Councilor Goodwin also expressed that an RFP that had specific details of what type of development the City would prefer along with targeting the right type of developers could be beneficial. Councilor Gibson stated that the monitoring wells have been an issue in the past and suggested the City offer to continue to pay for the monitoring wells in the RFP. Councilor Gibson also mentioned considering going with a realtor to sell this property, Councilor Goodwin stated that with a realtor the ability for the Council to have input on what happens with the property is limited. City Manager Belmore stated it could be challenging for the Council to have input but could always vote not to approve the sale based on the proposal's details. Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro stated that there is no harm in doing another RFP before moving forward with a realtor.

Councilor Gibson made a motion to request the City Council vote to approve proceeding with the RFP process for 1 Winter Street to include the City of Somersworth maintaining the monitoring wells and securing an easement for the sewer line. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro and passed 4-0.

STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SRPC) PARKING STUDY

City Manager Belmore provided the Committee with the map of the area of the parking study that was presented by the SRPC. The Committee made some adjustments to the area of the parking study that was presented to be

more concentrated to the down town area and not include residential areas. Manager Belmore mentioned they are looking for volunteers to assist in counting the parking spaces and all the Committee members volunteered and stated once the dates and times are determined we can reach out to other Community members as well.

DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CALMING AND CROSSWALKS

City Manager Belmore presented an email that was received concerning public safety issues with traffic and pedestrians at crosswalks in the downtown area around Market Street and High Street. Manager Belmore stated that he has brought this concern to Police Chief McLin and there will be some increased patrols in this area. Manager Belmore also provided information to the Committee concerning some details and cost for flashing pedestrian beacons that could be installed. The Committee discussed the location/s of where the flashing light beacons could be placed to be the most beneficial for pedestrian safety. Councilor Goodwin mentioned presenting a motion to Council in hopes to get one of these installed as part of the Constitutional Way project. There was further discussion pertaining to the funding source for the beacons coming from the Municipal and Transportation Fund as a supplemental appropriation. Councilor Goodwin stated that he will draft a Resolution to consider for the next meeting. There was also discussion regarding what other options are available and what other Communities do to slow traffic to assist in pedestrian safety.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Gibson mentioned researching a one-way traffic pattern for High Street to bring more traffic for the Plaza businesses. There was some discussion pertaining to the Plaza businesses being destination businesses, and changing the traffic pattern could do more harm than good in regards to traffic going faster and the High Street businesses being negatively affected by less traffic. Councilors discussed future meeting topics to include wayfinding signage and downtown traffic calming possibilities.

ADJOURN

Councilor Pardis-Catanzaro made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk