

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
September 29, 2017, 4:00pm.

Committee Members present:

Councilor Martin Dumont, Vice Chairman
Councilor David Witham
Councilor Denis Messier, Temporary Appointed Member

Administration/Staff present:

City Manager, Bob Belmore
Director of Development Services, Shanna Saunders
Assessing/Code Clerk, Christien DuBois

Committee Members absent

Councilor Jonathan McCallion, Chairman
Councilor Dale Sprague

Councilor Dumont called the meeting to order at 4:18pm

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, to accept the minutes of the meeting of August 1, 2017 as presented. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of 3-0.

HOUSE BILL 316-AN ACT RELATIVE TO STATEWIDE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION

Manager Belmore stated that HB 316 has been under the radar but has recently been published in Business NH Magazine. Manager Belmore explained that the piece of legislation has passed the legislature and has been recently signed by the Governor. The City Council has the option to adopt the measure. Belmore explained that the Council could provide a 5 year window, up to a 50% exemption on the local and the local education portion of property taxes for a period of up to 10 years for commercial and industrial development.

Messier asked if the tax break was on the incremental assessment from the addition.

Saunders answered yes, it would be on the new addition and would be a 50% tax break for a period up to 10 years for commercial or industrial construction.

Witham asked about the intent of the law, and mentioned that this law seemed more about encouraging employment, but does nothing to help the tax base. He stated that this would be very helpful for Coos County, but may not be applicable to the Seacoast Region. He continued that he

routinely hears from the citizens that our tax base is not large enough and hears less about unemployment problems.

Messier asked if somebody could use this new law to renovate the police station or would 79E be better.

Dumont stated that once HB 316 is passed, all new projects are granted uniformly.

A discussion occurred about potential developable lots in Somersworth and the potential tax ramifications of HB 316.

Witham motioned to have the ED Committee revisit the issue after January 1, 2018, seconded by Messier, the motion passed 3-0.

PLAN NH CHARRETTE

Belmore stated that both sessions of the event were very well attended and that the Mayor was going to convene a committee to further develop the ideas brainstormed at the event.

Witham agreed that the events were very well attended and that the process throughout the Charrette was good and he liked what the results of the Charrette were. Witham pointed out several specific items that he thought could be easily accomplished.

Messier agreed with the suggestions and stated he especially liked the gazebo idea from the Charrette and suggestions the City could plan ahead for some of the larger items.

Messier asked if money could be used from Current Use penalties to pay for some of these projects.

Saunders stated that it could not because the money must go into a land conservation fund.

A discussion continued about ideas to further develop around the riverfront.

Messier stated that he hopes the commission has specific items that should be addressed from the beginning.

MISC

Witham stated that he attended the GACIT meeting in Dover; one of the items that was discussed was the High, West High, Hamilton intersection. Witham also said that the Exit 10 project was also discussed. It was also encouraged that the Rt. 108 Complete Streets project through Dover and Rochester remain a high priority.

Belmore stated that the Council has often asked him the value of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC). Belmore stated that they have been very helpful through these processes and has

been a very strong partner.

Messier stated that the Rt. 108 corridor has been crucial to development and should remain a high priority.

Saunders stated that the new approach DOT has been taking is simply to ask whether or not a municipality supports a project and DOT will keep it on the plan, otherwise they remove it.

Dumont discussed the HDC meeting that occurred earlier in the week. A discussion continued about the plan for the former "Somersworth Hotel" and the economic benefits of the developer's proposal.

Witham motioned to adjourn at 5:00pm seconded by Messier, motioned passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Christien DuBois Assessing/Code Clerk