

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
September 23, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Donald Austin, Vice Chairman
 Councilor Crystal Paradis
 Councilor Richard R. Michaud

Administration/Staff present: Bob Belmore, City Manager
 Scott Smith, Deputy Manager/Finance Director
 Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk

Other: Christopher Jones, Owner - Speed of Sound

Vice-Chairman Austin called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVE MINUTES

Councilor Paradis made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 10, 2020 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 2-0 by roll call vote. Councilor Michaud abstained.

PLAZA SIGN APPLICATION FOR SPEED OF SOUND

Manager Belmore explained to the Committee that when signs are removed and replaced with a different shape or sized sign, the holes and marks left behind must be repaired. Owner, Christopher Jones indicated that the holes would be covered by the sign, and he will be painting regardless. Manager Belmore asked Mr. Jones if he planned on matching his sign to the others. Mr. Jones said he was fine with using white background with green lettering to blend in with the rest of the signage, but is flexible to other schemes if the Committee wishes.

Councilor Michaud made a motion to approve the signage subject to fixing and painting the holes and the signage and background being white and green, or some other appropriate colors. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis and passed 3-0 by voice vote.

PLAZA BUSINESS PARKING

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that this agenda item was a concept being introduced to see if this Committee wanted to provide some direction. He stated that the City had been contacted by a development company who was interested in purchasing the former Lucky's space in the Somersworth Plaza, however the potential buyer will only solidify a deal if they are leased approximately 25 parking spaces for a 30-year term. Manager Belmore stated that the company did offer to repave, restripe, and negotiate some contribution to aid in adding a green space to the parking area. Manager Belmore voiced concerns about already having businesses with dedicated parking in addition to the ripple effect this could have if other businesses wanted to lease parking spaces.

Councilor Austin said based on the map it looks like it is about a quarter of the available space of the lot and said he wasn't prepared to do that.

Councilor Michaud said it was too long to tie up that many spaces for that many years.

Councilor Paradis said that with no knowledge of what kind of business it is, it seems too long.

Manager Belmore said he mentioned to the company that the lot usually has many more open spots than that on a regular basis anyway. He also stated he would ask again for any flexibility in the length of term and the amount of the proposed contribution.

Councilor Paradis said if it was a really exciting business the City wants to have it would be easier to decide.

Councilor Austin said what they are asking for, even for 10-15 years, is a lot. If it was a shorter lease and a business that brought other attributes and benefits to the City a decision may be easier. Without knowing who it is, it is difficult to approve such a proposal.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Belmore said he and Economic Development Manager, Robin Comstock met with a developer who seems very interested in purchasing the old police station. The person seemed very interested and very likely to submit a proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Michaud made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis and passed, 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk