

MINUTES of the Economic Development Committee
ZOOM ELECTRONIC MEETING
January 20, 2021 @ 4:00 pm

Committee Members present electronically
via Zoom:

Councilor Martin Dumont, Chair
Councilor Don Austin, Vice Chair
Councilor Richard R. Michaud
Councilor Crystal Paradis

Staff Members present electronically
via Zoom:

Bob Belmore, City Manager
Director of Planning and CD Michelle Mears
Economic Dev. Manager Robin Comstock
Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dumont at 4:00 pm.

As Chair of the Somersworth Economic Development Committee, I, Councilor Martin Dumont find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform. The public was asked to submit comments via email to jslaven@somersworth.com or bbelmore@somersworth.com by Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. The public can access the meeting and listen live by telephoning any of the following numbers and then adding webinar I.D. # 891 3449 5633

1 (312) 626-6799 or, 1(646) 558-8656 or, 1 (301) 715-8592 or, 1 (346) 248-7799 or, 1 (669) 900-9128 or, 1 (253) 215-8782

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

APPROVE MINUTES OF November 4, 2020

Councilor Austin made a motion to accept the November 4, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis and passed by roll call vote 4-0.

SOMERSWORTH PLAZA

City Manager Belmore stated the City has been contacted by a developer that has interest in developing the Plaza and informed the Committee of some options he was exploring to assist in a partnership in constructing infill buildings with mixed use in the Plaza. Belmore inquired with the Committee regarding forgoing any further RFP (Request for Proposal) process, this property has gone out to RFP a couple of times in the past with no success. The consensus of the Committee was to forgo the RFP process and have

City staff and developer move forward with exploring possible options for further development of the Plaza.

FORMER POLICE STATION

City Manager Belmore thanked the Council members for quickly approving Resolution 24-21 last evening regarding the Cleanup Grant for the Former Police Station. Belmore stated that in addition to the Letter of Intent from a developer to purchase the building/site; he has also have received some additional interest on purchasing it. Chairman Dumont inquired about doing an auction sale process. City Manager Belmore stated that the Council was advocating selling it so that the City had some control on how the property would be developed and in a certain timeframe. In an auction process the sale just goes to the highest bidder who could then sit on it without developing it with the hope of its value increasing over time. Belmore stated the cleanup could take many months as they need final Governor and Council approval, go out to bid for a consultant and contractors and then complete the actual cleanup.

FORMER BRETONS SITE – 1 WINTER STREET

City Manager Belmore informed the Committee that he continues to keep pushing our consultant to get final approval from the State DES and EPA so they can get the property back on the tax rolls. Belmore mentioned an email update he had sent the Councilors that outlined the issue with conflicting soli testing data that needs resolution. Belmore stated he has had several people express interest in purchasing the site.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Dumont inquired about the old Chamber property; Economic Dev. Manager Robin Comstock stated the owner is still moving forward but COVID has delayed the opening of the new chocolate manufacturer business.

Councilor Dumont asked about the GAR building, and City Manager Belmore stated that building is now all apartments. EDM Comstock stated the apartments are beautiful. Comstock confirmed that the former Lucky's store in the Plaza had been sold and the new owner is looking to lease it.

Councilor Paradis made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Austin seconded the motion, the motion passed by roll call vote 4-0 at 4:32 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk