MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
October 17, 2022 – 5:45 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Donald Austin., Chair
Councilor Robert Gibson, Vice-Chair
Councilor Richard R. Michaud
Councilor Matt Gerding

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Finance Director Scott Smith
Director of Development Services Michelle Mears
City Clerk Jonathan Slaven

Chairman Austin called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councilor Gibson made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gerding and passed 4-0.

Z CAPITAL INVESTMENTS PROPOSAL UPDATE

Manager Belmore reviewed a letter from Z Capital Investments which outlined a number of requests including the waiver of certain municipal fees, City retention of ownership of the retaining wall, relocation of sewer line, acceptance in the Chapter 31 (RSA79E) Tax Incentive program, and the City providing Z Capital and future tenants indemnification from future environmental liability. He explained these would be sizable hurdles to get past. He explained that there is a new section in State Law that would allow tax relief for a vacant lot should the City adopt it, however it would need to include housing other than market rate apartments.

Councilor Gibson stated he does not believe the proposal to be a good fit. There is already a substantial amount of low-income housing in the downtown area and residential development is a key component to vibrant downtown. Councilor Gerding stated he was neither interested in the City retaining ownership of the retention wall, nor indemnifying the developer. He inquired if a betterment district would be appropriate. Director Smith stated is could be a possibility, however, they are typically for installing new utilities or when municipalities make improvements to private property such as the City did on Nadeau Street. Councilor Austin noted the developer's reluctance to addressing the City's request of commercial on the first floor with residences above. Councilor Gibson also mentioned that giving this developer special treatment and moving the sewer line for them sets a bad precedent and others will expect the same.

Manager Belmore informed the committee that he followed up with a number of questions for clarification and is awaiting a response from Z Capital.

The Committee reached a consensus to have Manager Belmore engage in further discussions with Z Capital and report back to the Committee.

FORMER POLICE STATION UPDATE

Manager Belmore explained the former police station project is taking a little longer than expected, but is nearing completion. He stated that the City's consultant informed him the project is on budget and

they will be complete when the oil tank is removed, which should be in the next couple weeks. He stated he would like to advertise a request for qualifications, and interview candidates to bring back to the Committee. Councilor Michaud said this was a good idea and is looking forward to seeing what ideas are submitted.

BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Director of Development Services Michelle Mears updated the Committee on recent development activity including DSR Motor Group's proposal (Tri-City Dodge) for a 24,000 square foot complex across from where their current facility is on Route 108, a daycare facility associated with a local hospital, and Central Fence on Willand Drive. She also mentioned that many businesses are currently adding to their existing facilities and noted that the project at 85 Elm Street will be going before the Historic District Commission in November for approval.

Councilor Gerding inquired about movement on the Sports Dome project. Manager Belmore stated he believes the project is still being held up by the NHDOT.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Michaud made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk