

Notes from Spencer Economic Development Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 28, 2019 @ 6:30 pm

Spencer Town Hall/Conference Room A

In attendance:

Tony Pepe, Chris Woodbury, John Stevens, Paul Dell'Aquila (Town Planner)

Meeting was moved to Conference Room B because of the excessive heat in Room A.

c.t.o 6:37 p.m.

Paul shared a draft of CMRPC's Gateway Improvement Project. Members present liked the proposed renderings and asked if some minor edits could be made to the brightness of some of the photos. Paul will relay feedback to CMRPC. Tony noted we could use these renderings as part of a future EDC presentation to the Selectmen.

Paul gave an update on MDI grants. On the 2018 MDI grant on Downtown Design Guidelines, Paul is working with Emily Innes from Harriman on a public open house probably in April. Also, town successfully applied for a 2019 MDI grant, which will look at ways to integrate the expanded Mechanic St. parking lot. No initial consultant meeting has been set yet, but it will also likely be in April.

There was discussion about the Town's blight initiatives. Tony would like to make a presentation to the BOS to initiate a round of public outreach. Paul will coordinate with Brenda on potential dates. There was much discussion on the various steps of outreach including letters mailed from Town (Tom or Paul) and a public meeting. We want to have incentives and tools in place before outreach, so there is some "carrot" and not only "stick". The group made suggested edits to Paul's handouts, which he will incorporate.

Paul reported that he would be applying to MassDevelopment for predevelopment technical assistance, with the goal for studying what kind of downtown/economic development entity the Town should consider implementing, such as a redevelopment authority or business improvement district, to promote redevelopment.

Paul gave a brief update on the status of Sugden Block and Lake Street School. Purchase & sales for Sugden should be finalized in next month, while Lake Street will take longer due to the more complicated financing.

Paul shared the latest info on EDC membership & terms, per the Town Clerk:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(9 Residents, 2 Selectmen, 1 Planning Board Member, 6 Representatives from the Business Community-5 year Terms)

Joseph M. Smith	2021
C. Michael Toomey	2020
Shirley Shiver	2021
Christopher L. Woodbury	2022
Anthony D. Pepe, Jr.	2023

John Stevens & Warren Monette will have to be added to the list and sworn in if necessary.

Tony gave an update on a potential beer festival. Spence Ag Assoc has expressed an interest in co-hosting a beer festival, which would allow SAA to buy the beer up front, something Tony thinks would be a hard ask of the Town, given budget issues. SAA will be meeting in March to selected available dates and circle back. Tony also suggested that Paul reach out to Rapsallion again about their potential space needs.

John gave an update on planning for the Spencer Street pARTy, which is being planned for August 24. The planning group will make a presentation to the Selectmen on March 11, and we will be able to share more details at the next meeting.

There was also discussion about getting a hotel in town to support tourist activities Chris raised the question of water and sewer capacity. Paul noted that he had reached out to the State last year about land it owns on the north side of Route 9 at Route 49, but was told that the state would not allow development there. The former Reliant location was noted as a potential spot. Paul said he would be going to a Discover Central Mass event the next morning and would start to find some info about hotel developers/contacts.

The minutes for the January 26 were reviewed. Motion to adopt by Chris, second by John. Vote 3-0 to adopt the minutes for the January 26, 2019 meeting.

A quorum of members from the December 4 meeting was not present, so no vote was taken on those minutes.

There was discussion about the next meeting, which was set for March 28 at 6pm.

John made motion to adjourn, second by Chris. Vote passes 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22

Notes compiled and submitted by Paul Dell'Aquila