

FINAL

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION &
DOWNTOWN TIF ADVISORY BOARD
JOINT MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023 – 4:00PM
Council Chambers – City Hall – or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES**

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: William Dunn (Chair), David Newlove, Kevin Purcell, Chip Brown, Councilor Karen Liot Hill (Vice Chair), Dan Nash

EDC MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Doug Whittlesey, Andrew Key, Tracy Hutchins (Upper Valley Business Alliance)

TIF MEMBERS PRESENT: Barry Schuster (Chair), Victoria Smith, Christina Haidari, George Sykes, Peter Owens

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- The May 24, 2023 Downtown TIF Advisory Board meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM. The Economic Development Commission meeting was not yet called to order, as a quorum was not present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. April 26, 2023

An unofficial vote was taken regarding the April 26, 2023, minutes, as a quorum for the EDC was not yet present.

*Motion by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes of April 26, 2023, as presented.
Second by Mr. Purcell.*

*** The Vote on the MOTION was approved by the EDC (4-0-0) and the TIF (4-0-1).**

Chair Dunn explained that various elements for redeveloping the lower parking lots have been considered. Some elements that have not yet been discussed include business use, housing mixes, timing, and roadwork reconfiguration options. Since the last meeting, he has discussed with City Manager Mulholland what the City Council is expecting as deliverables from these conversations. This will need to be included on a future agenda.

Mr. Brooks explained that a discussion regarding clear guidance on deliverables for the back parking lot area has been scheduled for the June 21, 2023, City Council meeting. Additionally, a 20 Spencer Street discussion item has been scheduled for the June 7, 2023, City Council meeting.

Chair Dunn explained that EDC is being asked to potentially redirect its discussion onto the 20 Spencer Street site, as EDC was originally involved in conversations on this item. This will be a topic at the June 7th City Council meeting. The EDC may then need to reprioritize its discussions on these topics. There were originally three developers interested in the RFI for the back parking lots and it could be possible that these developers are also interested in the 20 Spencer Street site.

Mr. Brooks noted that it has been four years since the City issued an RFP for the 20 Spencer Street site. At that time, there were two responses, and one was selected. The developer has since walked away from the project.

Councilor Karen Liot Hill (Vice Chair) entered the meeting and voted affirmatively to approve the meeting minutes of April 26, 2023.

*** The Vote on the MOTION was approved by the EDC (5-0-0) and the TIF (4-0-1).**

In response to a question from Mr. Brown, Mr. Brooks explained that NHDES has lifted the activity and use restriction on the 20 Spencer Street property. There is a continuing requirement for groundwater monitoring on the site. The site can be developed while being monitored, as the groundwater is not proposed to be used for any purpose.

Councilor Liot Hill stated that the City Manager mentioned to the City Council that the previous developer would not be moving forward with the redevelopment of 20 Spencer Street. Instead, conversations were being had with the Lebanon Housing Authority regarding potential workforce/low-income housing on the site. She suggested that the City Council should discuss if this is the right direction or if other options should be considered, as that would be a large change from the original scope. As part of this discussion, she suggested that the EDC and TIF be involved.

Mr. Brooks noted that a tax-credit project might not generate as much tax income as a market-rate project, but both would generate some amount of TIF revenue from the property, which is currently generating zero income.

Mr. Sykes stated that the City Council has competing interests to explore. The EDC and TIF have focused points of view to be mindful of. It is important to hear from the City Council as to where it would like the EDC and TIF to focus discussions.

Ms. Smith stated that, regarding the Spencer Street project, the previous developer was going to make some of the units affordable. It could be possible to include both types of units on this site.

Mr. Purcell stated that he has heard from residents that ownership units, mixed office space areas, and larger units would be of interest. He asked if there should be a pause on Spencer Street and the back parking lot projects, in order to focus on other items of economic development interest.

Chair Schuster stated that increasing ownership in the Downtown will create a more sustainable Downtown. If Spencer Street could include ownership, this would be great. There needs to be consideration regarding increasing density in these areas. Zoning ordinances have some impediments toward this. Lebanon is a unique community and should remain this way, while considering opportunities for increased density in certain areas.

The EDC and TIF agreed to put forward thoughts for the City Council meeting on June 7th regarding being involved in the ongoing Spencer Street discussion.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Review and Discussion of Responses to Downtown Redevelopment Request for Expressions of Interest (RFI)

This item was previously discussed.

Motion by Mr. Owens to adjourn the TIF meeting at 4:47pm.

Second by Mr. Sykes.

**** The Vote on the MOTION was approved by the TIF (5-0-0).***

B. Discussion of Regional Cooperation with Nancy Merrill, Planning & Development Director for City of Claremont

Chair Dunn explained that Nancy Merrill was unable to be present at the meeting this evening. A previous UNH study found there was a lack of regional collaboration. A business inventory could be considered with the City of Claremont.

Mr. Purcell stated that lack of social engagement in the Upper Valley was also part of the study. This is consistent with what he sees day-to-day as part of the retention of jobs in this area. There could be discussions regarding how to reduce the attrition rate. The younger demographic would likely want for services to be considered and recruited.

Councilor Liot Hill suggested that there may already be data available that could be used for a gap study.

The Commission agreed to continue discussions on this topic.

C. Review and Discussion of Master Plan Update Process for Chapter 6: Economic Development

Mr. Brooks reviewed a redlined copy of this document with the Commission. The Commission reviewed the draft Vision & Purpose Statement. Mr. Brooks stated that the strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan have been adopted by the City Council.

The EDC agreed with the draft Vision & Purpose Statement, as amended.

D. Appointment of EDC representative to West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee

The Commission discussed a representative to the West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee. Chair Dunn explained that a person has potentially been identified and he would like to continue discussions with Ms. Hutchins regarding this.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

As previously discussed during the meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE: June 28, 2023

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

The EDC meeting was adjourned at 5:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude