

FINAL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024 – 4:00PM
Council Chambers – City Hall – or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: David Newlove (Chair), Dan Nash, Chip Brown, Andrew Key, Councilor Karen Liot Hill (Vice Chair), Tracy Hutchins (Upper Valley Business Alliance, remote)

EDC MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Doug Whittlesey, Kevin Purcell

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks, City Manager Shaun Mulholland

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- The April 24, 2024 Economic Development Commission meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. March 27, 2024 (Joint Economic Development Commission and West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee)

Motion by Dan Nash to approve the minutes of March 27, 2024, as presented.

Second by Chip Brown.

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

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Update on 20 Spencer Street

Mr. Brooks explained that on March 6th the City Council authorized the City Manager to negotiate with Jake Tamposi regarding a project on this site. The Tamposi project proposal is linked on the City's website. Negotiations have been ongoing and a field survey of topography on the site has been completed. Approximately 15-20% of the site is below the base flood elevation and the rest is above. The City will partner with Tamposi to pursue a conditional letter of map revision for the portion below base flood elevation. HUD requires that all portions of the project site be above the base flood elevation. Conversations with the City's environmental consultant have been had regarding the status of the property. The activity and use restriction for the site has been lifted. There is an ongoing expectation that the groundwater of the site will continue to be monitored twice a year, as elevated arsenic continues to be a concern but should not inhibit redevelopment of the site. The project will be on City water, sewer, and storm drainage. Additional wells could be added to the site, if needed.

David Newlove asked if parking will need to be under the proposed building due to the floodplain issue. Mr. Brooks explained that the Tamposi proposal does not include parking under the building. The western portion of the site is above base flood elevation and so construction should be possible in that area, but groundwater is relatively shallow and may limit extensive excavation on the site.

Mr. Brooks explained that he has made introductions between Tamposi and art organizations in the City and the Lebanon Housing Authority. The development and option agreements are being worked through at this time. Construction is not expected to start before next spring.

B. Strategic Plan Review and Update

The Commission reviewed the updated Economic Vitality section of the Strategic Plan.

Councilor Liot Hill suggested adding Housing as a Strategic Objective in this section. Mr. Brown agreed. Mr. Brooks noted that there is a separate section dedicated to Housing & Neighborhoods that the EDC is mentioned in. The Vision statement also speaks to housing. This section of the Strategic Plan will be taken up by the Council tomorrow evening at a work session. Councilor Liot Hill stated that she would bring up her suggestion at that time.

C. Discuss potential TIF District for the Main Street Area of West Lebanon

Mr. Brooks explained that the Commission recently met with the West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee to discuss the background of what a TIF District involves. The Commission can now discuss what it wants to see happen in West Lebanon and if a TIF District is the best way to achieve those goals. The West Lebanon Revitalization Committee will also be working to answer these questions from their end. The two groups will meet for another joint meeting to compare these thoughts.

Councilor Liot Hill stated that the Commission already has a lot of background regarding what West Lebanon wants and a list of priorities were suggested by the original WLRAC to the City Council on January 19, 2022. This list of prioritized items included Westboro Yard, completing the Greenway, streetscape improvements, Bridge Street Park, fostering a sense of place, zoning changes & economic development, pursuing a TIF District, Seminary Hill School, West Lebanon Fire Station redevelopment, 3 Seminary Hill, and the streetscape roundabout. The Commission should be respectful of the work that has already been done.

Regarding Westboro Waterfront Park and the City's acquisition of a portion of the Westboro Yard property, Mr. Brooks stated that the City is waiting for alternate proposals on environmental liability to be proposed by NHDOT. There is a groundwater management plan already in place for all of Westboro Yard and NHDOT has agreed to retain responsibility for that Plan. However, there is concern regarding what could be found on the site at some point in the future and the State has so far declined to maintain responsibility for any possible scenario. The next meeting on this topic is May 15th. City Manager Mulholland stated that the dry bridge project is expected to begin in 2025 and it would be nice to be able to link that project with the construction of recreational facilities, if possible. The City is responsible for any future contaminants found on the Bridge Street Park site.

The Commission discussed including redevelopment of the Main Street properties on the priority list.

Regarding zoning amendments for the West Lebanon Central Business District (CBD), it was noted that there was pushback to proposed adjustments to the CBD in the past, but some changes have already been adopted since 2022.

The Commission discussed making a redline document to then share with the West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee at the next joint meeting.

Mr. Brown exited the meeting. The Commission no longer had a quorum and the meeting ended.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. Master Plan, Chapter 6, Economic Development, Review and Update

This item was not addressed at this time.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE:

- A. Wednesday, May 22, 2024

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

The EDC meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude