

Economic Development Council
Minutes: November 8, 2006, 10:00 am
Judge Welsh Room

Present:

Members: Chairman Stephen Melamed, William Dougal, W. Todd Dever, Henry Tuttle

Staff: Building Commissioner Douglas Taylor, Acting Assistant Town Manager/Grant Administrator Michelle Jarusiewicz

Public: Judy Cicero representing the Chamber of Commerce, Michelle Couture representing the Board of Selectmen

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Steven Melamed.

Waive minutes of last meeting until officially available

Public comments solicited: None

Steve Melamed opened the meeting advising the necessity of discussing the Articles presented for the November 13, 2006 Special Town Meeting. The first Article which needs attention from the EDC is the article on affordable housing (Article 12). Comments from the members were invited.

Bill Dougal brought up the portion of the local housing partnership relating to the proposed change of use from commercial to residential use requiring properties with 5 or more units to develop 33% of units as affordable housing. Great concern was raised that this Article is premature due to the lack of dialogue and planning with the EDC and other boards. The December Summit Conference will be making recommendations and therefore this Article should be considered at the April Town Meeting.

Todd Dever asked how the CPC felt about this and Bill said that they will propose a postponement of the Article.

Henry Tuttle indicated that more data was needed, specifically on development projects for the preceding 5 years – how many greater than 5 units? -- how many greater than 10 units?

Steve suggested moving the Article forward to the April Town Meeting, expressing concern about serious negative impact on the community due to lack of consideration of EDC and Planning Board.

Bill recommended a more thoughtful, careful approach and suggested an impact study be performed.

Michelle Couture explained the decision to move forward with the Article was made in lieu of many properties that were slated to put forward a change of use this winter (Michael Shays, Holiday Inn, Surfside Arms).

Steve suggested a moratorium on change of use applications due to the new incoming ZBA and new by-law. A moratorium would require legislative approval and therefore would be a timely process.

A robust discussion was held with a consensus concern that the Article is not well thought out and will require a thoughtful analysis and development of community support.

Motion made by Todd Dever as follows:

In order to assure that no negative impact in the overall progress towards the goal of affordable housing, indefinite postponement of Article 12 until such time as a comprehensive plan with recommendations to town voters at next April's Town Meeting with involvement of all affected Boards and Summit Conference.

Seconded by Bill Dougal

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Bill began a discussion of Article 14 which seeks to abolish the Historic District Commission. While the HDC needs better standards of performance, the EDC still sees the HDC as an economic driver – “Don't throw the baby out with the bath water” While there are serious operational issues, the HDC is still needed.

Steve asked Michelle Couture if the Board of Selectmen had the right to suspend the HDC. Michelle indicated that the BOS has met with the HDC on numerous occasions and the BOS sees the HDC as necessary and cannot be disbanded.

Steve indicated that the HDC should be advisory and not regulatory, the HDC reflected no consistency in its actions, however the need for an advisory board is critical.

Bill suggested the need for a definition of historic restoration\preservation versus historic development, an independent consultant perhaps would be helpful in this regard. A powerful statement from the BOS to revamp the HDC would be beneficial.

Todd proposed as given that the town needs historic guidance or sensitivity based on economic implications.

Henry recommended the development of constructive change to improve the practice of the HDC.

Further discussion was held to determine whether or not the EDC wanted to be recognized at Town Meeting and whether or not to support Article 14.

Motion made by Bill Dougal as follows:

To recommend to the Board of Selectmen and with the EDC to make a report at the November 13, 2006 Special Town \Meeting to support Article 14 and furthermore to make the following recommendations:

- Planning Board is to define the scope and purpose of the new HDC
- HDC to be an advisory board
- The new HDC articulates the difference between historic restoration versus historic preservation to maintain the character of the town.

Seconded by Henry Tuttle.

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Motion made by Bill Dougal to amend prior motion on Article 12 as follows:

The EDC will recommend to the Board of Selectmen and report to the voters at the November 13, 2006 Special Town Meeting that in order to assure that no negative impact in the overall progress towards the goal of affordable housing, indefinite postponement of Article 12 until such time as a comprehensive plan with recommendations to town voters at next April's Town Meeting with involvement of all affected Boards and Summit Conference.

Seconded by Henry Tuttle

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Next meeting of the EDC will be November 29, 2006 at 10:00 am

Michelle Jarusiewicz informed the members that the Mt. Auburn interviews are scheduled for next Wednesday. There will be interviews of approximately 45 minutes with EDC members and that members should provide available times to her as soon as possible.

Motion made by Bill Dougal as follows:

To recommend to the Board of Selectmen and to provide a report to voters at the November 13, 2006 Special Town Meeting to approve Article 1.

Seconded by Todd Dever

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Members reviewed Articles 2, 3 and 4 and upon brief review decided that no action would be taken.

Article 5 was discussed in connection with the stated need for more public restrooms in town and whether the property of Article 5 would be an appropriate use for both public restrooms and a welcome\visitors center.

Todd suggested the installation of individual pay toilets in various locations.
Steve reminded the members that there is a by-law against pay toilets in town.

Motion made by Bill Dougal as follows:

The EDC proposes an amendment that the proceeds of the sale of Article 5 be restricted to the development and maintenance of additional public restrooms.

Seconded by Henry Tuttle

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Motion made by Steve Melamed to amend the previous motion to read as follows:

The EDC will apprise the Board of Selectmen that the EDC is offering an amendment to Article 5 as follows:

The EDC proposes an amendment that the proceeds of the sale of Article 5 be restricted to the development and maintenance of additional public restrooms.

Seconded by Henry Tuttle

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Article 6 was discussed to clarify that the \$14,000 is a shortfall from 2006 and that the cost for 2007 will be \$78,000.
No action to be taken.

Members reviewed Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 and upon brief review decided that no action would be taken. It was acknowledged that street performers are good for the economic development in town.

Steve reminded members that the next meeting was November 29, 2006.

Henry distributed packets for members to review pursuant to the Planning Process Framework. Copies to be distributed to members not present.

Motion made by Todd Dever to adjourn meeting.

Seconded by Henry Tuttle.

All vote to approve motion: 4 in favor, 0 against, 3 absent

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm