

Minutes, Bucksport Economic Development Meeting - November 10, 2015

Attending: Andy Lacher, Larry Wahl, Mark Eastman, Linda Plourde, Byron Vinton, Jim Boothby, Bill Tymoczko, Peter Stewart, Daphne Eyerer, John Paul LaLonde, David Kee, John Wardwell, Ron Russell, Frank Dunbar, Joel Wardwell

David Kee called the meeting to order; meeting minutes from October were read. Corrections: should read RSU 25, not 24. Also, Joel Wardwell emphasized that the comment “the Industrial Park really sells itself” was not quite accurate; it does require marketing, and a lot of work was put into its’ progress.

David Kee stated the new Economic Development Director will be announced Thursday night at the Council meeting. All are welcome to attend.

Foreign Students: Jim Boothby has passed along to the RSU Board our motion to look into the viability of a foreign student program; it will now be part of their budgeting process and discussions. John Paul LaLonde asked if these would probably be 1 year visas? Jim said yes, but there *may* be a change coming, as a federal level bill is sitting in the House of Representatives which, *if passed*, would make a 4 year visa possible.

The position of Finance Director is on hold, as interim Town Manager Sue Lessard is handling the financial work currently.

The steering committee of the Main Street program is working on having the Pop-Ups downtown for the holidays again this year, and it is approved. There are currently 4-5 businesses lined up. They will open the Saturday after Thanksgiving and remain open until the first weekend after the new year; also plan to be open some evenings. As a reminder: there is a Pecha Kucha event planned for December 3 at the Alamo.

An item regarding Cabella’s is tabled until the next meeting. The subject of the permit request from A.I.M. will be discussed at the next Town Council meeting.

There was discussion of the dams – Silver Lake, Alamoosook and Toddy dams, and the pipeline to Silver Lake from Alamoosook. Chris Johnson was present and said Rick Knowlton from Maine Water Co. had been helpful; he believed the next step is the formation of a Silver Lake Association, and he intended to talk with Linda Plourde on that. Linda reported that in the Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting a very lengthy discussion of the water resources issue, the condition of the Alamoosook and Toddy dams and precarious condition of the Alamoosook pipeline, led to the consensus that a sub-committee on water resources should be formed, which would continue overseeing these concerns after the Comp Plan is completed. Jeff Fitzgerald and Linda have both asked Sue Lessard about this, to take to the Council; also the forming of a Silver Lake Association. David Kee asked if the committee thought this was a critical issue, and it was decided to put this on the Council agenda and the BEDC agenda for next meeting.

Discussed the food vendors being on the waterfront, and whether we should go to the Ordinance Committee or continue discussion here. There are clearly two views on this. Mark Eastman will bring information for us at next month’s BEDC meeting.

Bill Tymoczko reported that he and Jim Boothby met with Ellsworth YMCA Director Peter Faragher and Sue Ann Craig, the Bucksport Seniors Director, as they’d requested. Bill feels the Ellsworth group needs to make a decision, then meet with our group. If they are not prepared to go forward, we would approach the Bangor YMCA, and Bill believes they would be receptive. When asked if their Capital Campaign was part of the problem, Bill stated that the Blue Hill project was a struggle at first, and they had other issues. They would take over our Rec. program first; then look at a building. Peter asked if it would hurt us with Bangor if Ellsworth said no? Bill said it would not; but they need to move. Jim suggested they do a model, with numbers, etc. The Council can’t guarantee dollars in the future, but we would write the plan to show the coverage. We do need time to work with Bangor, our budget, etc. if Ellsworth doesn’t want to move forward.

David Kee stated the Economic Development Ad Hoc committee is doubling up on meetings in order to get something together for us for a January target date, and then on to the Council. They are looking at community ideas next Thursday, 11/19 at 6 p.m., which should be informative. There are five (5) meetings to get in before January. Dates need to be set soon.

Joel Wardwell brought up a question regarding an “electric co-op” possibly being formed in Bucksport. He remembered that it was looked at maybe 15 years ago, and asked if it has been approached again? This would be similar to a Madison/Anson program, and several towns would be involved. This might be the right time, and could replace the mill. It had been looked at because of the capacity of the power plant. David Kee asked if we should look into it, and it was decided that we would have the new Economic Development Director pursue it. It was also suggested that we encourage the Director to set priorities within 6 months, one year, etc., when we meet with him/her. (Chris Johnson said Elliot Cutler had once suggested the electric co-op as a great idea for Bucksport). Byron Vinton said the Council (and BEDC) discussed it 6 years ago and had a speaker come – they looked at personnel costs, set-up, etc., and found it prohibitive then. He believes we should look at it again, and if we could absorb some personnel costs, paperwork for set-up, etc., we’d have better odds of going forward.

David Kee asked us to read his hand-written notes on the issue of debris and grasses. We can take action on properties that are in foreclosure or public (town) property, but not private land. We would have to have a property maintenance ordinance to deal with the tall grass, bamboo, etc., on some waterfront properties. People generally are not willing to adopt these, as seen as infringement of private property rights. Linda Plourde asked if there were any way we could have the dead “driftwood” trees removed that are lying on the shore at the “center of the universe” waterfront area? Peter Stewart will ask the Council re: trees and above “clean-up” issue.

Peter Stewart made a motion to adjourn, John Wardwell seconded. Adjourned.

Submitted by Linda Plourde

Next regular BEDC meeting will be Tuesday, December 8 @ 5:00 p.m.