

Minutes
SKOWHEGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
REGULAR MEETING
July 13, 2016
7:30 AM
Renaissance Center – Conference Room

Members Present:

Jason Gayne, Chairman
Kurt Maynard, Vice Chairman
Todd Smith, Treasurer
Betty Austin
Kristina Cannon
Matt Dubois
Sally Dwyer
Doreen Poulin

Members Absent:

Reid Gibson
Billy Finley

Others Present:

Jeff Hewett, Director of Economic & Community Dev.
Dena Rich, Recording Secretary

1. Call regular meeting to order.

Jason Gayne called the Meeting to order.

2. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation minutes from the “regular” meeting May 11, 2016.

Motion by Kurt Maynard, seconded by Todd Smith to approve the minutes from the “regular” meeting May 11, 2016. Vote 8-0, motion carried.

3. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation financials from May.

Motion by Kurt Maynard, seconded by Todd Smith to approve the financials from May. Vote 8-0, motion carried.

4. Old Business

a. New Business Certificates

The Board was given four design choices to decide to be the SEDC Welcoming Certificate to all the new business coming into Town. The Board chose the certificate with the SEDC logo in the middle (See image below). With a vote by tally marks of 6-0.

WELCOME TO SKOWHEGAN					
Owner Name					
<small>The Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation would like to welcome you and your business to our town</small>					
COMPANY NAME					
					
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>PRESENTED BY:</td> <td>, Chairman of the Board</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ON THIS DAY:</td> <td>July 23, 2016</td> </tr> </table>	PRESENTED BY:	, Chairman of the Board	ON THIS DAY:	July 23, 2016
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5. New Business

- a. Discussion and decision to renew a Lease with Don Acorn Substance Abuse and Mental Health for leased office space in the Renaissance Center for one year. (Don is in agreement and has no changes).**

Motion by Sally Dwyer, seconded Todd Smith to renew a lease with Don Acorn Substance Abuse and Mental Health for leased space in the Renaissance Center for one year term at a rate of \$400.00 a month. Vote 8-0, motion carried.

- b. Item came in after agenda was posted. Brantner, Thibodeau and Associates letter of agreement for Audit of SEDC records.**

Jeff Hewett let the Board know that this letter of agreement came in after the agenda went out. It is the same cost of \$1,500.00 to Audit our SEDC records as the previous year. He did let the Board know that next year the Town is going to be putting the Audit out to bid and whoever is awarded we will go with them as well.

Motion by Betty Austin, seconded by Sally Dwyer to allow Jason Gayne, Todd Smith and Jeff Hewett to sign as Officers of the SEDC Board the Audit Letter of Agreement with Brantner, Thibodeau and Associates for a cost of \$1,500.00. Vote 8-0, motion carried. Letter was signed at the end of meeting by Jason Gayne, Todd Smith and Jeff Hewett.

- c. Item came in after agenda was posted. Possible proposal for lot in Southgate Industrial Park.**

Jeff Hewett let the Board know that within the next couple of weeks he is anticipating a proposal from either Civil Arms or Evergreen Organic. He had taken a group from Evergreen Organic to tour the Industrial Park. Our park was not the only one that they looked at that day, but our park was one of three they were going to look at again for a

final decision. Evergreen Organic is very interested in the same lot that Civil Arms is looking to purchase. Our office is hoping by the next meeting to have one of these Companies' proposals for the Board to discuss.

6. Committee Reports by Members

Broadband

No Committee update.

Natural Gas

No Committee update.

Acquisition/Development

No Committee update.

Marketing

Kristina Cannon let the Board know that last week they did a soft launch of visitskowhegan.com.

Run of River

Kristina Cannon let the Board that the impact study was put in front of the Selectmen's at their May meeting. The Selectmen had questions about the paddling audience in the community, and what sort of maintenance funding would be needed for future maintenance issues. She took this back to the consultants and they have done some additional research and have come back with a more solid impact study. She went to the Open Canoe Whitewater Championship in Old Town last week. She spoke with Clayton Cole who runs the event and he has offered to come and speak with the Select Board about the paddling community in Maine when the final impact study is presented.

7. Items by the Members

Kristina Cannon let the Board know that Main Streets Business Enhancement Committee has been doing a lot of research on business incentive programs. Kristina said she had gotten the information that Jeff's Office currently offers to business and thought that we could expand on the paperwork side, and possibly some step-by step instructions. (See information below on the research gathered).

Business Incentive Package

Goal: Provide incentives to entice entrepreneurs and business owners to choose Skowhegan for their

new business venture; provide support to existing locally owned businesses

Currently offering:

- Paperwork via website, offer to help from Jeff/EDC (Town/SEDC)
- Contact info for Chamber, SEDC, MSS, KVCOG, etc.
- Micro loans, RLF (SEDC)
- Grand opening, ribbon cutting celebrations (press release, social media, certificate, plant) (All)
- Business seminars and trainings (MSS)
- Marketing assistance (MSS)
- Grant assistance (MSS)
- Facade Grant opportunities (Town)
- Opportunity to join Chamber of Commerce for additional incentives (BAH, business listing) (Chamber)
- Opportunities to engage with community (cited by Forbes as one of most attractive qualities a city can have when looking to increase small businesses/entrepreneurs) [Small Business Saturday, River Fest, Holiday Stroll, etc.]

Proposed Elements of New Package:

All of the above, and the following:

- Benefits of living in Skowhegan and Central Maine (central location, laid back way of life, access to mountains, recreation, etc.)
- Information about Skowhegan's current business climate
- Information about current business needs (retail gap analysis?)
- Welcome tour of Skowhegan
- Assistance with finding available space and facilitated meeting with owner
- TIF Credit Agreement and Omnibus Clause - ability to take property out of downtown TIF and put into new TIF as an incentive for new businesses/developers
- Opportunity to participate in the Entrepreneur Challenge (every other year)
- Self-evaluation for entrepreneurs to determine whether they are ready to open a business
- Detailed document that includes step-by-step instructions, information about what is needed to start a business, and a checklist (different based on business category)
- Business mentors program and networking opportunities - group of business mentors who can offer assistance/suggestions/advice
- Marketing and business plan assistance (Main Street and mentors)
- Financing/banking info and contacts
- Insurance info and contacts

- Legal info and contacts
- Contact info for local service providers (electric, water, garbage, internet, phone, etc.) contacts
- Contact info for local plumbers, carpenters, snow plow removal services, etc.
- Assistance/suggestions for locating labor force
- Info about what businesses need to know once they are up and running (snow removal, etc.)
- All info updated regularly and found on online
- Grant opportunities communicated via email
- Job shadow/apprenticeship program with local schools (SCTC/Cornville Charter)

Future Elements to Consider for Inclusion:

- Expedited paperwork process - completed in one day?
- Permit, etc. fees waived for first year?
- Forgivable loans from TIF? Or TIF matching grants?
- Internship program via partnership with KVCC/Thomas?
- Business incubator/accelerator
- Tax incentives or credits [examples: businesses can choose between a cash incentive or a tax credit package, and in some cases, qualifying businesses can take advantage of both programs.]
This could be based on whether the business is filling in a gap or fulfilling a need in the community. We could offer incentives to XYZ type of business that will create 10+ new jobs, for example.
- Town willing to work with owners on code?
- Incentives analysis (determine which incentives/credits a business would qualify for)
- Chamber membership - free for new businesses for first 6 months?
- Foreign Trade Zone (Central Maine Growth Council is working on this now and Skowhegan is included as part of the zone)
- Broadband (10/10)

Promotion of incentive package to entrepreneurs and local business owners:

- “Open for Business” marketing campaign
- Personal outreach to successful business owners in Maine
- Utilize all email contact lists (MSS, Chamber, town) to promote availability of this information
- Utilize social media to promote availability of this information
- Utilize other public venues to promote availability of this information

Information Obtained via Research

“Groups of entrepreneurs tend to attract more entrepreneurs”

Tom Post Forbes March 14, 2014

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/tompost/2014/03/13/the-best-places-to-launch-a-startup-in-2014/#3fafb619359c>

Indianapolis IN has Vergehq.com which helps connect founders, builders, and investors with each other. Provides education, resources, networks, and live events to help make starting a company outside of Silicon Valley easier for all of us. It is for people who are growing tech companies or investing in them.

Memphis TN offers support with both incubators and accelerators.

Columbus OH has a Small Business Builder Program to help entrepreneurs get started. Columbus has a Small Business Concierge which is easily found on their home page. The contact person's contact information is made available.

www.columbus.gov/Small-Business//Start-Your-Small-Business-in-Columbus/

Denver CO's Small Business Development Center is well-integrated with the business community giving new company owners the resources needed to succeed.

Raleigh NC utilizes local colleges and their talent.

New Hampshire offers a free energy audit and technical assistance for any new or relocating business. **Portland Maine** offers a Use Tax Exemption in which the tax reimbursement benefit allows a business to pay no tax on all new tangible property purchases that are to be physically incorporated in, and become a permanent part of, real property of a qualified business and used in its qualified business. Both Portland and South Portland offer GAP financing for any business that intends to relocate or expand to their community.

Minneapolis MN offers a variety of financing programs from local and state grants to low cost loans matched by the city. They also offer a low business tax rate. There is an available educated workforce available.

Miami FL offers an annual Startup Weekend Miami where entrepreneurs can form their ideas into companies and hear talks from seasoned business founders.

Omaha NB has Omaha Small Business Network which offers valuable support to young companies and offers Nebraska Advantage Tax Incentive

(<http://neded.org/business/tax-incentives>)

Des Moines IA offers Business Innovation Zone - Square One DSM which helps entrepreneurs by providing advice and mentoring to startups and entrepreneurs from idea to capital raising and beyond. Square One DSM offers a variety of networking opportunities including startup stories, a monthly interview program
(<http://squareonedsm.com/>).

Raleigh NC utilizes the local colleges and available graduates to grow technology and medical care in the area.

Nashville TN provides an Incubation Center at Tennessee State University which offers support for startups for a period of up to five years.

Salt Lake City UT - the University of Utah offers growing businesses many resources, from support in getting funding to finding office space. The state also offers a pdf titled Doing Business in Utah and on page 8 is a self evaluation and checklist for starting a new business.

Denver CO offers a labor pool that is young, active and educated. Denver also provides startups with great access to talent. The City's Small Business Development Center is well-integrated with the business community giving new company owners the resources to succeed.

Memphis TN offers support with both business incubators and accelerators.

Indianapolis IN has a great business tax climate. VERGEHQ.com connects founders, builders, and investors with each other. Verge provides education, resources, networks, and live events to help make starting a company outside of Silicon Valley easier for all of us. IT is for people who are growing tech companies or investing in them. They also offer INDYMADE.COM which is similar to Maine Made. The Indianapolis business community also offers a mentorship to help startups and existing businesses.

Most cities targeted certain types of businesses such that they would draw in others. Florida is an example of such <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/why-florida/business-climate/incentives/>

Oklahoma City OK - Combine a strong small-business-lending environment and a lower cost of living, and you have a surprising startup haven. Recently, *Apartment Guide* listed Oklahoma City on its list of "10 Affordable Cities Where Luxury Apartments Are Within Your Reach. " [Multiple other publications](#) list it as a fast-growing city that's great for recent graduates and among the best for starting a business. _

It's also very easy to start a business in this city and state, as the necessary paperwork can be done in one day. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249735> Oklahoma is globally recognized for its outstanding incentive programs and pro-business environment. Businesses can choose between a cash incentive or a tax credit package, and in some cases, qualifying businesses can take advantage of both programs. <http://okcommerce.gov/business/incentives/>

New York City NY offers NYC Business Solutions which is a no-cost service designed to educate entrepreneurs in everything from business plan writing to branding/marketing, to labor law and accounting.

Roanoke VA drew in government agencies, private businesses, nonprofit organizations and community institutions. Carilion Health Systems, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia have made major investments to redevelop former rail property adjacent to downtown, creating a new economic engine for the city.

Douglas GA provided funding for the Chamber of Commerce to hire a full-time director of entrepreneur and small business development. One of the director's first initiatives was creating "A Helpful Guide to Starting and Growing a Business in Coffee County, which outlines local resources, permitting and zoning processes, tax policies, and steps to get business loans.

https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/business/small-business-development-center/documents/docs/how_to_start_a_business_in_douglas.pdf

Kristina Cannon also wanted to let the Board know that she was at a KVCOG meeting where they were discussing about the Free/Foreign Trade Zone. The Central Maine Growth Council is working on this. Skowhegan is part of this Zone and she feels we should promote it once it's official; it is for businesses in the zone that import items from international places and the items will be duty free. For example if a company buys a bottle of wine from Australia and put it in a box of goodies so it becomes part of something else other than just a bottle of wine; you pay a significantly lower duty compared to the full duty of just importing and selling as bottle of wine.

Jason Gayne let the Board know that now the Chamber of Commerce is open 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. They are still working on expanding into the weekend within the next month. The Business After Hours is happening at Sappi Fine Paper on Waterville Road next week on July 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Todd Smith welcomed Matt Dubois and Kristina Cannon to the SEDC Board.

8. Economic & Community Development office Items

Jeff Hewett let the Board know that the Dog Not Gone Company in Skowhegan; who make high visibility and tick repellent apparel for both dogs and humans, are semifinalist for the season 2 of the Greenlight Maine Program. The show airs on Saturday nights on channel 2 or 6.

Jeff Hewett let the Board know the Town has finalized the Photo Contest; for the best artist representation of Skowhegan during the summer season. The Contest is running now and until August 31. The top winners for each category adult or youth will receive a \$50 gift card to Wal-mart and the runner-ups in those same categories will receive a \$25 gift card to Wal-mart. For more information call the office or visit the Town of Skowhegan website for the 2016 Photo Contest.

Jeff Hewett invited the Board to the Broadband meeting on July 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Skowhegan Municipal building. He said this meeting is an update about what the consultants have come back with for information and where the group would like to see our area move towards for projects.

Jason Gayne wanted to let everyone know that the Somerset Public Health Recreation Passport is going to the Printers this week. The Passport has most of the trails in Skowhegan in it; there is question of what may be on this trail at the bottom of each trail page.