

MINUTES
SKOWHEGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING
May 5, 2021
9:00 AM
Municipal Building Council Room, Online Zoom Meeting & Facebook Live

Members Present:

Billy Finley, Chairman
Jason Gayne, Treasurer
Kristina Cannon
Reid Gibson
Cole Clement
Steve Gray

Members Absent:

Matt Dubois

Others Present:

Jeff Hewett, Director of Economic & Community Dev.
Renee Belliveau, Recording Secretary

Others by Invite:

Donna McGorty

1. Call meeting to order.

Billy Finley called the meeting to order at 9:05am., quorum was met.

Billy Finley welcomed Donna McGorty as potential new board member.

2. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation minutes from March 3, 2020.

Motion by Jason Gayne, seconded by Kristina Cannon to approve the minutes from the “regular” meeting from March 3, 2021, vote 6-0 motion carried.

Reid Gibson joined back in at 9:07am.

3. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation financials from February, March and April of 2021

Motion by Betty Austin, seconded by Kristina Cannon to approve the financials from February, March & April of 2021. Vote 8-0 motion carried.

4. Old Business

a. Discussion and decision on comprehensive plan.

1. See attached: questions from Joel Greenwood

Jeff Hewett states there was a business list sent out from our town website that has 592 business names and all are mapped out around town; these two things were sent out previously for another meeting. Are there other important things throughout that need to be added to this by board members?

Billy Finley asked if there was a sub committee to work on these things. Addressed board to see their opinions of whether a sub committee needs to be created to work on.

Jason Gayne volunteers to help with sub committee and Billy Finley offers to volunteer help and work with Jason Gayne.

Kristina Cannon will share info and input, if meeting time permits.

Jeff Hewett will set up meeting times. Jason Gayne and Billy Finley vote to have meetings face to face over the next couple of weeks.

Kristina Cannon states there are many things included in comprehensive plan for businesses and things happening in the Skowhegan community and it's important to get that information out there for future possible grant funding.

Billy Finley asks if there is a deadline for funding and Jeff Hewett answers that the planning board has dropped back on their schedule and we will try to get ahead of them and get back to them with our input.

b. Update of lock installation on the bathroom doors at the Renaissance Center.

Jeff Hewett states locks are set in place on the bathroom doors and everything is locked up.

c. Update on issuing of hex keys for Renaissance Center renters to lock doors after clients leave for the evening.

Jeff Hewett states locks are in use and that there is one problem that has come up since which one was client could not get in with their current key. We hope to have this fixed by the end of the day for that client.

5. New Business

a. Discussion and decision on renewal of Gerald Thibault lease at Renaissance Center.

We are trying to get back on normal schedule of lease, due to covid. Jeff Hewett states there is additional information for all other lease payment amounts. Gerald has the least amount of space at \$430.00.

Reid Gibson motions to raise his rental amount to \$450.00 for a 1-year term.

Billy Finley seconds. V 8-0, motion carried.

b. Discussion of Todd Smith's resignation on the SEDC Board of Directors.

Billy Finley reads aloud Todd's resignation letter to SEDC board.

Vote was made to accept letter of resignation, V 8-0, motion carried.

6. Committee Reports by Members

a. Broadband

Jeff Hewett gives update of meeting with Christian Savage from SCEDC and Brian Lippold from Sewall Co. We are supplying them with all of the addresses in Skowhegan that are assigned to a building and data with where the fiber is in Skowhegan. We are supplying knowledge of where Consolidated Communications infrastructure is. This was taken from our data and will be input into Google Earth. There will be a meeting on May 6, 2021 so we can try to address the push for broadband all together in the Skowhegan area.

b. Natural Gas

Reid Gibson asks whether this topic needs to stay on future agendas. Jeff Hewett states long term, we should be ready to discuss and entice natural gas into remaining downtown area. It should be pushed in comprehensive plan and kept on our radar.

c. Acquisition/Development

d. Marketing

e. Run of River

Kristina Cannon states they are 90 days out for submitting permit applications in to the state and federal regulatory agencies. They are also working with a local construction firm to see what certain projects to need to be done to get a more concrete budget numbers going forward. They have submitted some large requests for funding and hope to hear back soon on those.

Billy Finley asks timeline for permits to be approved. Kristina Cannon answers that she's hopeful it will start within a year, if permitting and fundraising go well.

7. Items by the Members

Jeff Hewett states that as committee, we should keep in mind; the state of Maine is aggressively moving forward with development of train tracks into multiuse trails for outdoor activities. There is a lot of potential for Skowhegan to get involved.

Reid Gibson asks about trails between Bingham and Solon is shutting down trails, however, no one else on board has heard this. Jeff Hewett will look into this and try to follow up.

Kristina Cannon updates board on the survey being conducted by Main Street for local businesses and their needs. Once they have contacted everyone and collect their findings, they are happy to share with SEDC board to address needs.

Kristina Cannon working on another project for real estate in community and has just hired Jeff Levine to do a real estate assessment for redevelopment of downtown spaces.

Kristina Cannon updates board of work and renovation that is happening on The Space at the River and encourages board to take a tour.

Kristina Cannon updates on advertising of brew bags for this year. There have been some emails sent out and on Facebook and Main Street's website.

Reid Gibson mentions to board of an article he stumbled upon regarding local business owner, Dick Lacasse and him being one of the last cobblers in New England.

8. Economic & Community Development Office Items

Jeff Hewett asks about future meetings for SEDC. Restrictions within building have started to relax, do we still want Zoom or start doing more in person meetings.

Reid Gibson prefers to be on Zoom indefinitely, with or without covid. Cole Clement is happy with having option. Jeff Hewett states we will keep Zoom and the option to come in person, whichever works for the individual.

Jeff Hewett updates board about power issue at Northgate building. CMP inadvertently burned up a box while trying to shut power off for a section of the building. We have Kris Laney up there to do the repair, in which the cost will be picked up by CMP. Kris Laney will also separate some power addressed to certain areas of building for the next tenant going in.

Jeff Hewett reminds everyone that the façade program is running and we are finishing up with Town funds from last year. We are starting façade grant for this year through the state and if the board knows of any local businesses that could utilize grant funds, please let us know so we can help them along.

Update on the EDP grant that was submitted for Bigelow Brewing. The letter of intent has been accepted by the state and the application will be submitted by the end of this month. Bigelow Brewing should be expanding from their old location to the new location at 7 Island Ave as well.

Meeting to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting- Reid Gibson motions, Kristina Cannon seconds. V 8-0.
9:47am