

Jan 19, 2023, 7:00 p.m. EDC Meeting Minutes - Virtual

- Attendees:
 - Jodi Harris, Tina Lane, Martha Mazzarino, Margaret Eklind, Donna Roy, Ryan Madrigal, Shelly Bradbury, Town Administrator Brendhan Zubricki, BOS Chair Ruth Preen, Cape Ann Chamber rep Olivia Perez-O'Dess, Jessica Kagle
- Meeting called to order at 7:08 pm by Chairman Harris.
- Public Comment: None
- Minutes from the 12/08/22 meeting were approved
- 2023 Goals and Objectives
 - Jodi talked about the status report she had shared with the EDC members and how it could also be a good model for other committees to keep people informed. If created as a google doc, all members can edit to keep track of all projects, new projects and coordination with other committees. Those named on report should update every month
 - The report can help update general public
 - Jodi is looking for input from the committee
- Downtown Lighting Design Update
 - Brendhan reported that the state grant engineer Stantec knows much of lighting situation on causeway. The BOS had authorized the Chair to sign the contract for lighting design before Christmas yet at mid-January, it is still not signed due to contract edits. They are hoping to sign by next BOS meeting so the designer can layout plans that can be reviewed, specified, go out to bid, award bids and begin work by public bid contractor in May. We need to consider timing of disruption because the sidewalks will be torn up at "flags" of concrete. Ipswich Municipal Light department will then wire and set poles, attach banner & plant hangers at a cheaper rate than prevailing wage because they are a fellow municipality. Street light installation will probably take place at night.
 - Discussion about timing concerns:
 - Donna asked if work would conflict with the special event and also the height of the season. Brendhan said yes and added we want to have banners hung by the fall season. Lead time is tripled. Ryan asked if we can order lights early. Brendhan said possibly, then it can be incorporated into design.
 - Margaret asked what is the last date to use money and should we have a back-up plan? Brendhan verified it was Dec 31, 2023 and that the learning curve is too long to seek other options as Stantec understands system.
 - Jodi said she was anticipating getting choices of fixtures of our chosen style from which to select. Brendhan said Stantec will not recommend design but will work with our selection. Perhaps our placemaking consultant, Civic Space Collaborative (CSC) architect or lighting person can advise. Jodi wants to look at what is available and lead times. Ipswich Municipal Light department may be a good source to refer us to online catalogs for lights, posts and accessories. Brendhan will contact them and get back to us
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 - Mass DOT will work on sidewalk between Water St. & the Gloucester line sometime in calendar year 2023. The town asked if they can have conduit buried during the work for future use. The state sent plans of what they were going to do and asked us to mark up where we would like to see conduit and what we think it would cost. The town has no money to buy lights at this time but the state will get back to us as to whether they will include our request in their work.
 - Jodi is in contact with BOS chair Preen and pointed out that we have a significant run of businesses on that part of town and it was worth putting in infrastructure with state funds
 - Committee took an advisory vote of support for BOS to support this effort. Margaret moved, Ryan 2nd and it was approved
- Update on "Guide to Doing Business in Essex" – Margaret Eklind/Tina Lane
 - Margaret spoke to people in Town hall about the process for new and existing businesses and that a pamphlet would be appreciated by the clerk. Brendhan shared that by using online permitting, the flow through and communication between different departments has improved. After 1 year of reporting we can see financial benefits of the tool. Open.gov is customizable for other

departments' needs. Jodi pointed out the value to the town is in closing open permits. Brendhan explained that assessors look back every year on Jan 1 and incorporate new values into assessment as new growth. It is not ongoing each quarter due to municipal laws.

- Tina reported her work on the EDC home page of the town website: Added a "News and Announcements" feature, cleaned up outdated links, added dates to reports for reference, created a Business Resources page
- As part of the "Doing Business" effort, Tina is gathering related forms for review at this time some are online, some are pdfs from the web and some are paper only
 - Re: the online permitting, Tina would like to see "get ready" instructions before beginning the permitting process to let user know what information will be needed to complete the application. Brendhan will check to see if that can be done by an IT person who can customize at a good price
- Margaret would like to have photos of the town to include in the handout and suggested they include shots of the 4 business clusters.
- Shelly suggested we use the page to highlight businesses on a rotating basis
- A summer intern can help with website work
- Placemaking Grant Update
 - Jodi reported she met with consultant Civic Space Collaborative (CSC) twice,
 - Walked causeway about ideas, noting which spaces are important,
 - She is seeking plans for planted spaces. We have money to maintain but will need more for new installations and will be seeking funds at ATM. Need plans for planting, art, seating, tables. Waiting to hear back from them in 1 ½ - 2 weeks at the end of January.
 - We are using the same consultants for the off-season event. There is crossover effort as we are also looking to utilize same spaces.
 - Donna asked about trash receptacles. Lots of trash collects along the river embankment by the causeway. There is no place to dispose trash or places for curbing dogs. Was there a calculation, for example, that within a ½ mile, is there a rule of thumb for many places to sit / trash receptacles? Jodi mentioned that the owner of We Dream in Color mentioned there is trash on her doorstep daily. It is a priority and she will call DPW.
 - 24 Martin St (site of old Fire Station) - Future Use
 - Jodi asked if there were water issues on the site. Brendhan reported that Mike Galli had mentioned that the backhoe sunk during work, but it is a heavy machine. Jodi is concerned about installation of seating or table on unstable ground. Brendhan offered background of the drainage on the site and suggested that DPW can install perforated pipes parallel to the slope to connect to the drain as a possible solution.
 - Jodi will continue with placemaking and will report back next meeting and certainly in March
 - Shelly, as visual artist, wants to be part of placemaking. Jodi said there are quorum issues that need to be considered and, if necessary, will post as a public meeting
- Off Season Event Grant Update
 - Dana contacted the state and we are able to push event to the weekend after Mother's Day, May 19th -21st target. Theme is about birds, bees, blooms. There is a Birds & Bees Event at Greenbelt to tie into.
 - There is a working group and 2 sub groups. Jodi & Donna are attending both with some business owners attending as well. They are working on how to include businesses in the entire town, how to get people to move around, how to get people thru the doors of businesses.
 - Jodi and Donna expressed that the consultant's contribution is less than anticipated considering the consulting dollars of grant funding they are consuming
 - There is trouble getting the consultants to come to the table prepared. They are relying on us for information, and we were expecting them to present ideas to us. They are looking to Donna for vendor names and prices. We were hoping for more from them we will push for more.
 - Needed from CSC are timelines, budgets, what durable goods we can get out of this process, responsibility, boots on the ground who will be doing this work on the event days.

- Would like the consultant's expertise on what known specific strategies will yield specific results. That will help the business make decisions and take actions that would result in day of and future sales.
 - Using the same consultant for placemaking and event causes the focus of meetings to go off track, ie being at event meeting and the discussion drifts to placemaking which would be a different audience.
 - Brendhan countered that it was necessary per BOS' desire to have lighting/placemaking/event grants all on the radar at the same time because initially the event was a March event.
 - Focus is a challenge but we are moving in a direction. We want to tie revenue back to all businesses. Donna asked committee to please get the word out and see if there is someone that we can help
 - Responding to Margaret's question of what we are tying into, Donna explained the strategy of coordinating timing with some regular annual events scheduled in Essex, ie. Cogswell's Bird Walk through Audubon, or Greenbelt's Birds and Bees. A Spring theme tie in can include a walking route art installation down the causeway for a period of time. There are 30-40 artists that live in town. Other examples could be a piggybacking on Art in the Barn, Shipbuilding Museum or Cultural Council events as a Come to Essex invitation for out of towners and residents.
 - Tina asked about what durable goods will we get from the grant. Jodi said tables and chairs will be purchased and can be later be used at the pavilion. She has asked the consultant for a budget as we need to look at police detail, marketing materials, pre-event advertising (such as signs that a private business can place on their property or Mothers' Day handouts for businesses so customers will come back for the event). Design and production of banners will not fit in the budget as most of budget going to consultants.
- Centennial Grove Pavilion Update/Future Event Rental
 - Donna continues to learn from Manchester's experience with Tuck's Point rentals
 - It was key for MBTS to find a part time person to attend to site in between events,
 - Replacement of durable goods on a regular basis needs to be considered
 - Requesting an email address to contact their underwriters in preparation of renting
 - Take photos before and after events. Credit card is held open until site is checked
 - No refund policy
 - No online rental portal. A 1-1 communication avoids conflicting requests on the calendar
 - Brendhan reported that footing, slab and possibly frame will be complete by the time summer camp starts. There will be a construction fence around site and Dan Mayer will coordinate with Camp Dory
- Discussion concerning the possibility of a grant to improve the Centennial Grove versus other grant opportunities and Discussion concerning the future use of the Centennial Grove Cottage (event use versus long-term lease)
 - In opening these discussions Brendhan mentioned that the BOS would like our input on 3 grant opportunities from the State's "One Stop for Growth Portal" which the town could pursue: 1) 100K Title search for properties off 128, 2) Plan a purpose for Municipal land (ie 30 Apple St.) or 3) Small Town Development fund
 - YMCA would like to work with the town for Small Town Development Fund grant for improvements at the Grove. Grant funding could be hundreds of thousands of dollars
 - Cottage needs heat, septic, well with structural repairs.
 - Donna thinks cottage has more potential for daily rental than pavilion with porch dining outdoors while still covered. It is more private, and we can have a preferred catering list with revenue back to town. Jodi sees the cottage as a town resource with unique opportunity to have revenue for corporate retreats, birthday parties, showers etc.
 - Discussed a long-term lease interest from Kestrel Education's representative Jessica Kagel and weighed their wants and needs. Town would also need to entertain proposals from other organizations if we open up an opportunity to Kestrel Education.
 - YMCA brings something to the grant application having already invested in improvements at the Grove and providing a turnkey summer camp operation for the town. Donna offered that Kestrel can be reconsidered should we not get the grant. Jodi would like to take advantage of grant

opportunities now because funds might not be available in the future. A >100K grant to fund improvements such as lighting & bathrooms can complete the Centennial Grove project.

- Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the BOS to pursue the “Small Town Development Fund” grant in time to meet the Feb 3 deadline to submit an expression of interest. Brendhan estimated we will know the grant decision by September
- Business Outreach Bridge to Businesses
 - Jodi and Donna reported that businesses would like to set up meet and greets for regular communications with the EDC. This will be added to the next agenda
- In closing, Jodi asked that members update their section of the status report
- Next EDC meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, 2/16/23 at 7:00.
- Meeting Adjourned 8:51

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Lane