

**Wednesday, October 22, 2014 Meeting Minutes**

**Economic Development Committee – Joint Workgroup Meeting**

**EDC Members Present:** Don Brown, Paul White, Ed Morrell, Lesia McKenzie, Barry Perry, Ginny Porter (present via phone)

**EDC Members Absent:** Jo Anne Wright, Steven Kyle Williams

**Staff Present:** David Bergmark, Patrick Reidy, Allison Rice

**Guests:** Brad Rhinehalt from Newland Communities

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The meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from September 24<sup>th</sup>. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bergmark said Ms. Porter was attending the meeting via phone conference.

Mr. Bergmark said he had asked Ms. Rice to put together a schedule for 2015's EDC meetings, which needed to be approved of by the Committee. He said the 2014 schedule did not have meetings listed for November and December, due to expected Holiday conflicts. Mr. Bergmark said that if the EDC had a reason to meet, they could continue to meet during November and December whenever their schedules would allow. Otherwise, he suggested that they reconvene in January. Mr. Berry suggested that they leave it to the Chairman's prerogative. He said if Mr. White decided that there was something important to meet about, then he could call a special meeting. Mr. Bergmark said that the EDC could call a Special Call Meeting, but that they would need to give at least 7 days notice to let the public know. Mr. Berry asked if anything would come out of that meeting that they would need to discuss in November. Mr. Bergmark said that was a good point, and that they would put the topic on hold.

Mr. Bergmark asked if everyone was generally happy with the time of the meeting. Everyone agreed that 5:30 on the 4 Wednesday of the month worked for them. Mr. White raised a vote to approve of the 2015 schedule as presented. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Bergmark introduced the topic of Buxton's Economic Development proposal from the previous meeting. Mr. White said that this would give the Town a lot of expensive information that the Town may not be able to pay for or use. The EDC agreed that this information might be useful in a few years, but not currently. Mr. Bergmark said he talked to several people, including Newland and Wake County Economic Development, who said they would be able to provide much of that information. He also spoke with other clients of Buxton's (Rocky Mount, Fucqua Varina, Ahoskie), who gave positive to lukewarm reviews of their services.

Mr. White asked if anyone on planning staff has economic development training. He said the money would be better spent training existing staff instead of concentrating on rules or regulations. Ms. Rice said there was a course offered by the UNC School of Government. Mr. White made a motion to not pursue a relationship with Buxton. Ms. McKenzie seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

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Mr. White made a motion to ask the Town Manager and the Board of Commissioners for money to send planning staff to the UNC School of Government for courses on Economic Development. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKenzie. Mr. Morrell said there was no point sending staff to get training for something they won't have time to implement. Mr. White said that one staff person could be trained, and they could let some of the planning go while half their time would be used with economic development. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Porter said that the Chamber of Commerce is considering putting together a nonprofit that would benefit the Town and the Chamber, where citizens could contribute financially. She said more would be decided at their retreat in January.

Mr. Bergmark said the Town Board had approved funding for upgrades to the park, including a dog park and an exercise trail. He said the Park and Rec director was looking for businesses to help sponsor benches and things like that. Mr. Bergmark said that the Town Board had approved funding for several events downtown, and Newland donated money for Opening Day.

Mr. Reidy said the Town's first mural had been installed at the back of Hendrick Insurance. There was some discussion as to whether this was a sign or a mural. Mr. Reidy said the appearance commission was raising money for a Town mural, and had been talking to artists. Mr. Reidy said the appearance commission was selling Wendell bumper stickers to raise funds for the mural, and suggested that businesses sell them as well.

Mr. Rhinehalt said that Wendell Falls was making two barn quilts, which will be listed on a Barn Quilt Registry. He said that the Town or some businesses might want to have some of their own to contribute to the Tour. The Economic Development Committee agreed this was a great idea. Mr. Perry said he might put one on his building. Mr. Rhinehalt said he had hired an artist. He said the artist volunteered to talk to the Town about costs and best locations if they were interested. Mr. Perry said he would talk to the artist and pay for one himself on one of his locations. Mr. White said the Town should invest in a second barn quilt, maybe behind the Amish Bakery. Mr. Rhinehalt said he would send the information to Mr. Bergmark.

Mr. Bergmark asked if the Committee saw any reason to meet in November or December.

The Committee was updated on wifi and fiber in the Downtown area. Mr. Reidy said the Town was still in the planning process for both.

Don Brown made a motion to adjourn at 7:27. The motion passed unanimously.