

- **Sep 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m. EDC Meeting Minutes – Town Hall Conference Room**
- Attendees:
  - Margaret Eklind, Shelly Bradbury, Jodi Harris, Town Administrator Brendhan Zubricki, Donna Roy, Georgeanne Richards, Tina Lane, Town Planner Dana Menon
- Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Harris.
- Public Comment: None
- Minutes from the 7/20/23 meeting were approved.
- Downtown Lighting Design Update
  - At this time, without final numbers from the engineers, installers and for police detail, an estimated \$200K will need to be requested at town meeting to complete the installation of 23 light posts.
  - Donna expressed concern about a town meeting request. Brendhan said that our estimates (and our earlier 100K town meeting ask) were based on numbers from the engineers. Had the original numbers been correct, we would have requested a higher amount at that town meeting.
  - Shelly suggested a video presentation at town meeting would help voters see the value of the project. Jodi pointed out that all costs have gone up in general and that we need to wait for final bids to come in before determining the final Fall Town Meeting request.
  - The brass plaques to be placed at each lamppost will be funded with \$40K from the pavement marking and signage project.
- Folsom Pavilion replacement project update.
  - The foundation and slab are complete. We are waiting for milled wood from Maine. Payments to vendors are current as well as a deposit for wood.
  - Dan Mayer and Mark Renzi report they will need an additional \$75K for roof and siding to close in the pavilion the season. The original estimate to replace the pavilion was \$500K. The town funded \$150K and materials and labor were donated.
  - We are waiting for decision on the \$500K grant for a bathroom unit and cottage improvements.
- Paglia Park update
  - The town is once again under agreement with the Paglia family for use of the park. The Paglia family expressed preference for a memorial stone with a plaque instead of a sign at the park. The contractor from the DOT will restore the grass so the town can return the benches to the park. Some CPA funds will be sought for improvements at the park.
- Review of mobile food or mobile sale of goods draft Selectmen's policy
  - Brendhan read responses received from businesses after the draft policy was shared with Essex members of the Chamber of Commerce. These comments will be considered by the BOS.
  - Discussion:
    - Current policy is that mobile vendors are not allowed on town properties except during town events. Impact on local businesses was a concern. Donna noted that per this draft policy, the license grantor could decide the impact on local businesses. Jodi pointed out that only Essex based businesses would benefit the town financially through collection of the .75% local meals tax.
    - Margaret suggested the food trucks would be filling a community need that local businesses are not providing. Donna countered that since trucks are currently not allowed, it is not that locals are not interested in meeting the community needs, but that the system is not in place to do so with food trucks. Donna highlighted the advantages a mobile food vendor has over a brick-and-mortar business because it is more cost effective to run with less employees, less overhead so that it can close when the inventory is sold out, and the ability to move from place to

- place. It would impact fast casual businesses (i.e. pizza, sandwich, corner store) in town. If the committee is looking for revenue, this is not a revenue maker.
- In Gloucester, mobile vendors bid on spots and the vendor pays large of up-front money to the city. In Rockport, mobile vendors must fill a void rather than compete with local businesses, for example Mexican food does not compete with existing offerings.
  - Revenue from the Clamfest benefits the Chamber of Commerce, and the town gets revenue only from the fees incurred from catering permit. Businesses see no benefit on that day.
  - Donna wanted reassurance that our decision does not compromise our efforts for renting out the Grove for private or public events as renters may want food trucks. In that instance they are regarded as a caterer and allowed for the renter.
- Committee voted to support the current position of the BOS of no food trucks on town property.
- Parking sticker fee
    - The Parking sticker fee was raised from \$5 to \$20 this year. Jodi thought it was worth a discussion at the EDC, noting that transfer sticker purchases (the price includes up to 2 stickers) are down from 1100 to 800. The transfer stickers also serve as resident parking stickers. The 300 people that opted out now need parking stickers. The price could fill that loss of revenue and suggested \$35 for vehicles that pay excise tax.
      - Discussion:
        - With limited parking spaces at Conomo and the town landing the BOS prefers presumptive criteria to determine eligibility for parking stickers. Presumptive criteria is a driver's license, voter registration or automobile registration with an Essex address. Some issues the BOS has seen is non-residents using an Essex address to get resident parking or people who own several cars allowing friends/relatives to use their vehicles for access to resident parking.
        - The transfer station sticker price along with the pay to throw cost has consequences. The town is mandated by the state to provide recycling. The town's waste tonnage has gone down, but recycling costs have increased. The cost of recycling is more than waste hauling. Some neighborhoods are pooling together to purchase 1 transfer station sticker to gain access to town recycling while using an outside trash vendor to save the cost of transfer sticker fee and bag fees. Also, there is an anticipation that the DPW will eventually relax checking for stickers, giving residents access to the recycling area. The DPW should not allow people past the entry gate without a sticker.
    - Committee voted to recommend to BOS a \$25 sticker price with a maximum of 3 per owner who meets presumptive criteria for the next year.
- Short term rental
    - 2 articles will be presented at Fall Town Meeting for an additional 3% community impact fee added to the existing 6% local. The first article will be for professionally managed short term rental properties and the second article for all short-term rental properties. A short-term rental is no more than 31 calendar days. Fee is paid by the renter.
    - Discussion led to how we can communicate to citizens in general and ahead of town meeting. Current methods are phone messages, alerts for those who sign up for news via the town website and Town Clerk and Police Facebook pages. Another outlet is posting to Annie Cameron's Facebook page. The goal would be to build interest in town for certain projects such as the owner unknown parcels and short-term rentals. Brendhan advised it should be one way communication only.

- Committee needs to prepare a presentation for town meeting. A screen will be available.
- Revenue opportunity that is not a tax on residents
  - Jodi mentioned a fee for the use of the ballfields to cover expenses for maintenance. The DPW would be the decision maker
  - Donna mentioned tiny homes as rental property at Conomo Point. This would put the town in a landlord position but there are management companies that the town could use. Tiny homes could also be considered for first time or senior buyers. Future zoning changes would have to be considered. Margaret asked about the status of the Housing Trust. Brendhan said no lot can meet wastewater requirement for large development like 40B without changes to state standards, new technology or expansion of Gloucester sewer treatment.
  - Margaret suggested concession stands at the fields as a revenue source.
  - Donna suggested a solar array on the new school roof to offset the town's utility bill. That would have to be negotiated with the MERSD.
- Owner unknown parcels
  - Brendhan read an email from Brian Barbre on his status of researching property owner for the 105 acre Parcel off Southern Ave. He learned it is not a 1 parcel search but many small wood lot parcels. The town lost track of ownership around the turn of the 19-20<sup>th</sup> century. He would like to continue the work if the BOS approves.
- Shelly presented the 18"x12" plates with the ship design for the lighting project. She is experimenting with the patina process. She would like to apply brass darkener before applying blue green patina. It was suggested the plaques could generate donations for the lighting project.
- Jodi would like to establish a regular meeting schedule and suggested the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. This can be discussed at a later meeting.
- The next EDC meeting will be held at town hall on Thursday, 10/12/23 at 7:00
- Meeting Adjourned 9:00
  
- Respectfully submitted,
- Tina Lane