

Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Via Zoom
January 21st, 2021
5:00pm

Attendance:

Cody McEwen (Chair), Matthew Bragdon, Randy Jackson, Annette Padilla, Brittany Grutter, Jessica Masse, Michael Madore

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm.

I. Review of prior meeting minutes - February 4th, 2020

II. Regional Comprehensive Plan and Gazetteer

A. Next steps

1. AP - Regional plan comprehensive plan is on website; 260 pages. Annette has provided a summary of 25 pages, with a presentation at the next council meeting.

MM - how long is this good for?

AP - confirmed that it will be good until 2033, but is a working document; we can build for the next update. Plan can get us extra consideration for grants. Our goals align with the State of Maine under 14 different chapters, and incorporates visioning already conducted in the region. Some chapters include Water resources and access to waterways, Economy, AG and Forestry, Recreation and Tourism, Fiscal Capacity and Investments.

AP - will connect with Matt Delaney to update the Library section.

AP -Regional plan is for the region. The summary has Millinocket data pulled out for public review.

2. Informational process for 30 days, and public hearing will be scheduled March 2nd. Then formal process for finalization.
MM/CM - can we check into payment to EMDC; Millinocket's portion?

B. Gazetteer - Initiatives the town were going to advance.

JM - Currently compiling realistic projects, and design lab assisting on creating a project dashboard. Bring awareness to both volunteers and investors.

III. Status of BikeMaine 2021 event

A. Recommend transfer to the Events Committee.

1. Event is currently tentatively rescheduled for September 11-18, 2021.
2. Committee agrees to transfer to Events Committee. CM will connect with Tom - Events.

IV. Millinocket Annual Survey

A. No survey/report - 2020

AP - staff provided input for the annual survey. Proposed additional questions for the next survey with a focus on Economic Development. Will send out questions to

others. Other questions added and reviewed were:

- Transportation questions proposed.
- Food Co - op: added additional questions for food sustainability.
- COVID questions - requests input for questions to get a temperature of public opinions on vaccinations, distancing, regional questions, etc.
- Education - for workforce readiness.

JM - We need to prioritize questions, and be careful on the length of the survey. It can be hard to get a good response rate with a long survey. We need to find a balance of questions to track with any new questions.

CM - Does a late Spring/earlySummer for the new timeframe?

-Committee agreed.

JM - We could adjust the target; hottest month on the town website is July. Other peak point is December for the marathon.

Committee: Let's focus the next run for end of June. Surveys were originally at the end of the year - to get a sense of the priority of the community members. All opinions matter for both here and away however.

BG - targeting tourism should be a priority as well to showcase what we have to offer.

MB - can we incorporate a QR code? JM - We can incorporate with designlab.

MM - Would the alumni association include the survey. Spring mailing? - RJ - be cautious on the alumni mailing list and we should check in to what they allow to advertise.

B. Facebook page

JM - Around 10,000 followers (only ~2,000 in the region/Millinocket)

JM - If we want to target directly to the community, or other geographic areas, we can boost posts for a small fee. (~\$30.00)

V. Downtown Revitalization

A. Community Development Block Grant and next steps.

CM -Reviewed CDBG status and action steps.

RJ - Can we incorporate electric car charging stations? Where are places in town?

CM - Veteran's Park, Municipal Parking lot, are possible areas, MM - Public Works garage area or Visitors Center at the chamber would be good locations.

JM - While charging they can walk through downtown.

JM - Residential stations are - \$600-\$700? How much does a commercial one cost?

MB - \$1500 - \$2000 for a commercial unit. (Tesla)

JM - Tesla pays for charging if you are a partner - check on that.

MB - Partnership program with Tesla

MM- Maybe include charging station costs in the electrical budget for CDBG if possible.

CM - Will need to check the budget and the State in addition to approved project goals. There is a buffer in the budget and may be available depending on cost changes from last year.

BG - PPI grant through Age-Friendly is in process and could compliment this work nicely - Penobscot and Central St. - Fall application with an 80/20 match?

B. Wayfinding - current status.

BG - News release went out yesterday. Alta documents are being compiled and we will be setting up a meeting for mid -February.

BG - Implementation for Millinocket is estimated at \$25,000.

C. Citizen's Institute on Rural Design - recap and current opportunities.

AP - worked with Lucy for final reporting. Some renderings were sent over of the work that was done.

Committee: CIRRD renderings for the website?

D. Northern Border Economic and Infrastructure Development Grant - recap and options for the future.

CM - provided recap and documents of grant. Unsuccessful in our 2020 grant for sidewalk replacement, but would look to this year's application. Will also look into the State CDBG program statement for 2021 to see if any programs can be applied to for this year.

E. DEP Brownfields Assessment Grant - current status.

CM - Town applied for grant in Fall 2020 for environmental assessment of the Downtown corridor. (Aroostook Ave, Penobscot Ave, Central St, Katahdin Ave); Application status pending.

VI. Broadband

A. Status and next steps.

JM - Our Katahdin: Organizing Fiber build out. Kat. Reg. Broadband utility has issued an RFP for a region wide build out - currently evaluating proposals for a full buildout. Process started 5 years ago.

VII. Goals

A. Committee goals/vision?

JM - have we as a committee established goals - Guiding principles (guide posts?) We could track job creations - how much jobs created over a certain period or grant funding - amount of \$ to bring in over a certain period.

CM - We do have goals/objectives present in other documents, but should look to a committee for some set goals as they align with the comp plan/gazetteer.

MM - a possible goal for the amount/percent of urban renewal in the downtown/business district.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.