Economic & Community Development Committee Meeting

December 14, 2023

5:30pm, City Hall

Meeting Minutes

Present: Melissa Lindley (GED), Carrie Arsenault, Debby Willis (chair), Councilor Terry Berry, Doug Baston, Tamara Whitmore (GMS), Christopher Leake (CNB)

1. Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm.
2. Review & Approve November minutes: Motion made to approve the minutes of November 16, 2023 as presented Doug Baston; Seconded by Terry Berry. Motion passes.
3. Parking Discussion
   1. Melissa: having a public parking map is coming up more and more in our discussions with events.
   2. Tamara: Would like to have some sort of draft to present at the Downtown Business Forum on January 22, 2023.
   3. Melissa is finding some great resources to work on the communication of parking.
4. Brownfields Update:
   1. The RFP is now out and needs to be posted for 30 days. Would close on January 11th, the date of our next meeting.
   2. Melissa would like a couple of people to review the submitted proposals.
      1. The positive of this situation is that Ransom Consulting has had some staffing changes.
      2. Melissa sent the RFP out to about 20 Environmental Engineering firms.
5. Upcoming Econ Dev Grant Funding Opportunities
   1. Community Resilience Action Grant - opened on 12/8 - up to $50K
      1. When is the application due? March 29
      2. KVCOG can help write
      3. First thought - engineering study for the waterfront area - concern on safety of the boardwalk
      4. No match needed!
      5. This round is only open to communities who have not received a grant yet.
   2. Community Resilience Energy Efficiency Priorities
      1. Improve energy efficiency, implement clean energy systems
      2. KVCOG can help write
      3. $100,000
      4. First thought - electric vehicle charging station and/or EV vehicle ($7,500 towards a vehicle)
      5. No match needed!
      6. Due February 16
   3. MDOT Infrastructure Adaptation Fund
      1. KVCOG can help write
      2. Could this be an option for the wastewater improvement project?
      3. Planning and/or Implementation.
      4. $50,000 for scoping project
      5. $125,00 for implementation
      6. No match needed!
   4. CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grant
      1. Up to $300,000, with 25% cash match needed
      2. LOI due January 21, 2024
      3. This is the grant that needs to have an area of the City designated as having “blight”.
      4. Doug’s question: Who defines the “downtown” area?
      5. Melissa will be putting out the RFP for the arcade redesign planning project soon.
         1. People comment on the back of Water Street buildings; if you come into town from Bridge Street or Maine Avenue, it is an ugly introduction to the city. Hannaford parking lot is also not a pretty entryway.
      6. There is another CDBG grant that focuses on facades, but you cannot apply to both grants in the same year.
   5. Melissa met with Andy and Denise last week and created a spreadsheet of funding opportunities and discussed priorities for the city.
      1. First priority is finding funding to offset the wastewater improvements that are needed.
      2. A lot of what we need is planning, so that we can be ready to make the fixes.
6. Planning for Incentivizing/Encouraging Economic Development
   1. What kinds of businesses do we want and how do we get them here? What are we willing to do to get them here?
   2. Removing barriers for people who want to invest.
   3. Tamara suggestion: Maybe we should come up with a matrix that lists what businesses we currently have, what kinds of businesses people say they want and identify the missing ones?
7. Efficiency Maine C-PACE Program - City will probably enroll so that businesses will be eligible for a lower APR loan for energy efficient updates.
8. The City is working on a new TIF district around the Commonwealth Avenue area. The request will go to the City Council in a few weeks.
9. Motion to adjourn at 6:58pm.

Next Meeting: January 11

*Look for new calendar invitation email for 2024 meeting dates*