



Downtown Tax Increment District Advisory Board

Friday, April 29, 2016, 8:00 AM

Waypoint Visitor Center, 14 North Street, Claremont, NH 03743

Meeting Minutes

Approved 4/21/2017

The meeting came to order at 8:00 AM.

I. Roll Call

Present: Robert Porter, Alison Raymond, Eugene Lattuga

City Staff: Mary Walter, Nancy Merrill

Absent: Guy Santagate

Others: Mayor Charlene Lovett, Scott Sweet, Victor St. Pierre

II. Minutes of April 24, 2015

Ms. Walter asked that the reference to "32 cameras in the area" be changed to "32 cameras throughout the City". There was not a quorum of members to take action on the minutes.

III. Old Business

There was much discussion regarding persistent vandalism in the parking garage and in the Main Street corridor near the downtown. There is a large homeless population that appears to be a large part of the problem. The garage elevator, doors and fire suppression equipment have all been repeatedly damaged at considerable expense to the City. Ms. Walter said she would look for a bit of surplus funds in the budget at the end of the fiscal year to purchase a new camera for the garage.

IV. New Business

A. 2017 TIF Downtown Budget

Revenues have decreased since the re-appraisal. All assessed values are down. It is unlikely they will recover quickly. The general fund will have to cover the \$330,000 in lost revenue from the closure of the River Road TIF. \$11M in new tax revenue will come back on to the tax rolls from the River Road TIF. All agreed that the River Road TIF was very successful. There is continuing growth in that area as well – the new Jewell Transport facility and the new North Country Smokehouse processing plant will be coming on in 2017.

Grissom Lane needs work – the turning radius at the Grissom/Route 12A intersection needs enlarging; and the road surface near the Charlestown Road intersection needs repairs. The Grissom/12A intersection can be addressed with TIF funds before the TIF closes at the end of the fiscal year, but the Charlestown Road end is outside of the TIF district, so City funds will be needed.

The idea of creating a TIF district along the Charlestown Road was briefly mentioned.

Expenses in the downtown TIF –

Environmental clean-up in the Sawtooth is ongoing. Ground water will be monitored for 3 years (residual from the foundry that once occupied the building). \$1M in remediation has already been spent.

Maintenance and Repair in the Garage – the sealant needs replacing and the brass fittings (removed by vandalism). The City is actually a year behind in the maintenance plan for the garage. The City has been paying \$13,000 - \$14,000 annually for general clean up and repairs; this will have to increase to \$40,000 (\$30,000 for sealant).

Mr. Lattuga expressed deep frustration with the toll that vandalism (broken windows, graffiti, etc.) has taken on his properties on Main Street. He said it has basically ruined the historic house that was to be the future home of the Stone Arch Bakery. He said there is not enough police presence and not nearly enough enforcement. He has put all of his buildings on the market.

It was mentioned that women walking from the Common Man to the garage do not feel safe at night.

2016 Maintenance and Repair funds will be encumbered to cover the Thyssen Krupp elevator maintenance plan.

Mayor Lovett asked if the cost of the vandalism can be tallied to make a case for increased police presence. Ms. Walter said it would be difficult. Mayor Lovett suggested perhaps a neighborhood watch might be helpful.

The homeless issue was discussed. Since the motel in Ascutney burned, there is no place to send them. It is “a huge issue” for the City. \$10-\$12M is spent each year on people needing services that only get them in Claremont.

\$6M started off the downtown TIF for the garage, the match for the pedestrian bridge, environmental remediation, and water and sewer separation on Water Street. \$11M was leveraged to get \$25M in return.

The recently adopted 79-E program (tax credits for improvements in the historic district) runs a bit counter to the TIF. However, taxes are frozen for only five years. The Ink Factory has purchased the building at 13 Water Street and is using the 79-E program to renovate and occupy it.

Mayor Lovett asked about the “messy hole” on Main Street behind the church. Mr. Lattuga said he owns it and said he had given up trying to keep it clean. He said he torn down the buildings that were once there because of the persistent vandalism. He said “they stole everything” and nothing was ever done about it – no one was ever identified.

Improvements to Main Street between the downtown and Union Street are scheduled to move forward this summer.

There was no further discussion about the budget.

Motion: To approve the 2017 budget as presented.

Made by: Mr. Porter **Second:** Mr. Lattuga

Vote: Unanimous in favor

V. Other

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM when Mrs. Raymond had to leave.

Respectfully submitted by,

deForest Bearse