

Community & Economic Development Committee
Thursday, March 4, 2021
Public Zoom Meeting - 6:30 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Poland CEDC meeting for March 4, 2021, was called to order at 6:30 via Zoom by Committee Chair Jennifer Letourneau. The Chair, as well as members Cyndi Robbins, Norm Davis, Raymond Cloutier, Stacey Bsullak, and Sheila Foley, are present. Alternate Member William Eldridge is absent.

Public Attendance: Town Manager Matt Garside, Recording Secretary Alex Sirois, Amy Segal from Sebago Technics, and Deputy Town Manager Nikki Pratt.

MINUTES

February 4, 2021

- Vice-Chair Cyndi Robbins makes a motion to accept the minutes for February 4, 2021, as presented, seconded by Member Norm Davis.
VOTE: YES - 6 NO - 0

REPORTS

Financial Report

- Town Manager Matt Garside outlines the two expenses from the previous month, the GIS broadband bill, and the admin payroll.
- The Committee has no questions.
- Matt comments that he feels there are sufficient funds in the CEDC account to hire a consultant to review the Downtown Design Standards.
- Member Sheila Foley makes a motion to accept the financial report, as presented, seconded by Member Stacy Bsullak. No discussion.
VOTE: YES - 6 NO - 0

Planning and Development Report

- Recording Secretary Alex Sirois informs the Committee that one business has registered in Poland this month. Evolve Nutrition a smoothie and energy drink bar is now open at 1484 Maine Street.
- The Planning Board did not approve of any commercial projects since the last meeting.
- The following commercial building permits were issued by the Code Enforcement Officer:
 1. Taylor Investments LLC (Spruce Bay Farm & Landscape) obtained a permit for a 50' x 60' commercial shop and office building at 1408 Maine Street, valued at

\$200,000.

2. Image Inc (Poland Spring Resort) obtained a permit to convert an existing guest room into public restrooms, valued at \$16,000.

COMMUNICATIONS

NWNA Strategic Review Announcement

OLD BUSINESS

CEDC Website Update

- Recording Secretary Alex Sirois updates the Committee on the ongoing website project.

Downtown Design Standards

- Recording Secretary Alex Sirois introduces Amy Segal from Sebago Technics.
- Amy worked for the firm that wrote the original standards that the Town of Poland design standards were based on. While at the firm, she did not do anything for the Town of Poland, however, she is very comfortable with the standards.
- Amy would like to hear some concerns the Committee has about the current Downtown Design Standards.
 - Vice-Chair Cyndi Robbins has mixed opinions and thinks that the standards are sometimes too much and sometimes too little. She feels that this Committee needs to make things business-friendly, but we also want character on Main Street in Poland.
 - Chair Jennifer Letourneau doesn't know if there are any specific standards that the Committee is looking to see changed, but she thinks they should be reviewed in order to improve the overall appeal. Avoiding situations like the new storage units with faux peaks.
 - Amy agrees and suggests that the cost for the faux peaks could have been better spent on additional landscaping at the front of the property.
- Amy feels that it is a good idea to revisit the standards to see if they are still relevant. The standards need to be written in order to give the Planning Board some flexibility.
- Member Sheila Foley asks if a citizen on Route 26 was required to install dormers, or a cupola as part of their Planning Board approval.
 - Amy points out that since these are standards and not guidelines the Planning Board must require them to be followed before a new commercial building can be approved.
- Amy also suggests an alternative method to handling design standards. Some towns do not require them to be followed as standards, but instead, they include them as design guidelines.
 - Jennifer Letourneau thinks a change like this might be helpful.

- Member Raymond Cloutier would be curious to know how these standards affect project cost. How much money are businesses having to set aside to make their structures look a certain way?
- Member Norm Davis thinks the Committee needs to first decide what we want the town to look like. Do we still want it to look like a downtown village?
 - Amy thinks this is an important question and suggests the Committee take a closer look at this.
 - Norm also points out that the center of town does not have all utilities which will restrict the type of businesses we are able to attract.
- Amy Segal reminds the Committee that they want people to know when they have driven through Poland, and hopefully make them slow down and stop.
- Amy Segal suggests involving the Planning Board earlier than later hearing their concerns or frustrations they face when hearing applications.
 - Jennifer Letourneau suggests a joint workshop with them in mid to late April.
 - Amy thinks she should first outline what the Committee needs help with, and a schedule for discussions.
 - Jennifer Letourneau is curious how this will factor into the existing Comprehensive Plan timeline.
 - Matt Garside reminds the Committee that the Planning Board will need to hold a public hearing for any proposed changes to the Downtown Design Standards. This would need to be held in January of 2022 at the latest in order to make the 2022 Town Meeting. He suggests that the Committee have their recommended changes completed by November, in order to give the Planning Board time to review on their end.
- Amy Segal also asks about the idea of possibly doing a presentation at the Spring Business After Hours event.
 - Jennifer Letourneau confirms that this idea has been discussed.
- Amy Segal will prepare a proposal and outline for the project and submit it to the Committee for the next meeting.
- Recording Secretary Alex Sirois asks if this would need to go to the Selectboard for approval.
 - Matt Garside believes it will need to go to the Selectboard because of the project cost. He does not see it being an issue since it is right in line with what the CEDC was created to do.
- Member Sheila Foley is curious if these changes would affect existing or new lots.
 - Amy Segal thinks this is a good point of discussion. Changes would apply to any new businesses that come to town after the adoption, or any alterations to existing site plans currently approved.
 - Sheila asks if the new changes could be applied to existing businesses. For example, can the CEDC ask an existing business to add additional landscaping? Can that be incentivized?
 - Recording Secretary Alex Sirois informs the Committee that new landscaping requirements could not be applied to existing

businesses. They would only need to meet the landscaping requirements if they alter their existing approved site.

- Raymond Cloutier asks if a program can be created to use funds to landscape or improve the appearance of existing downtown businesses.
 - Deputy Town Manager Nikki Pratt informs the Committee that TIF funds can only be used for landscaping on Town-owned property. Money can not be used to improve private property.
- Amy Segal will draft a proposal for the Committee and plan on returning for the April meeting.

Banners

- Vice-Chair Cyndi Robbins reached out to someone for a price on having additional banners made. If the Committee purchased a total of eight banners the price would be \$1,623.00.
 - Member Norm Davis makes a motion to approve the spending of \$1,623.00 for eight additional banners, seconded by Member Raymond Cloutier. No discussion.
- VOTE: YES - 6 NO - 0

Trail Maps

- Vice-Chair Cyndi Robbins spoke with Recreation Director Scott Segal and they are currently working on a new plan for the trails, and he will get that to us when they have finished. It would not make sense to print the maps until the change is complete since they would shortly be out of date. Cyndi needs to know how many the Committee would like to have printed. Should she get prices for 5,000?
 - The Committee agrees on 5,000.
 - As soon as she has the info she will pass it on to the Committee via email.

NEW BUSINESS

Affordable Housing

- Chair Jennifer Letourneau informs the Committee that affordable housing was recently brought up at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting. It was discussed that there is a very strong need for affordable housing in Poland, and she is curious what the CEDC might be able to do to help. Is anyone interested in setting up a subcommittee to review affordable housing in Poland?
 - Raymond Cloutier would like to know what we are considering affordable housing. Is it just low income, or does that also include elderly housing?
 - Jennifer Letourneau believes it would include both.
 - Sheila Foley is wondering if this subcommittee might include the Planning Board.
 - Jennifer Letourneau believes it could.

- Raymond Cloutier would like to know where the Town stands with Auburn Housing on their upcoming project. If it is going to happen what type of housing will be going in?
 - Matt Garside informs the Committee that they have recently resolved their issues with DOT and they will be finalizing their design. He does not believe it is just senior housing. It will likely be a mix. The next step after finalizing the design will be to go to the Planning Board.

LA Region Explore + Discover Guide

- Vice-Chair Cyndi Robbins informs the Committee that Poland Spring Resort has decided to advertise in this publication. It is the first time in approximately four years that this group has put out a publication. Does the Committee want to put something in? She feels that it could put something in to promote Poland as a place to live or locate a business.
 - Raymond Cloutier and Sheila Foley think it is a good idea.
 - Norm Davis thinks every attempt needs to be made in order to grow the town and that involves getting the name out there in these types of advertisements.
 - Stacy Bsullak wonders if it is too soon to put the new website URL on the advertisement.
 - Cyndi Robbins informs her that this would not come out until June so it should be fine to have the new URL on the advertisement.
 - Matt Garside asks what the price of the advertisement will be.
 - A full-page ad is \$1,000.00.
 - He reminds the Committee that if they go over \$1,000.00 it will need to be approved by the Selectboard.
- Cyndi will prepare the advertisement and send it to the Committee via email for feedback.

OTHER

- Member Norm Davis asks if anyone has heard any more about the project going on at the Poland/Auburn line.
 - Matt Garside informs him that a solar project will be going on there.
- Norm Davis reports that Auburn has sold their industrial park just up the road.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourns at 7:37 pm.

Recorded by: ALS

Accepted on: April 1, 2021.