

Brunswick Economic Development Corporation



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Summary of Meeting Held July 1, 2009

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brunswick Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was held on Wednesday, July 1, 2009 between approximately 2:40 pm and 4:45 pm.

Directors present: Debbie Atwood, Rol Fessenden, John Gerard, Michael Jones, Joanne King, Judith Long, David Markovchick, Bill Morrell, Thomas Rumpf, Steve Weems.

Town staff present: Brian Dancause, Kris Hultgren.

BEDC Vice President Steve Weems chaired the meeting. He welcomed Kris Hultgren, Brunswick's new planner, Department of Planning and Development, attending in place of BEDC Director Anna Breinich.

After approving the minutes of the previous meeting, the Board engaged in a discussion about the upcoming annual meeting of the BEDC on July 30. The Board reaffirmed its intent to make this a public forum on the subject of economic development in Brunswick, holding it in the evening from 7:00 – 9:00 pm on Thursday, July 30 in the Town Council chambers in the old Times Record Building at 6 Industry Road. The meeting will be televised.

It was agreed the meeting essentially would be a joint undertaking of the Town of Brunswick Department of Economic & Community Development, under the leadership of (BEDC Director) David Markovchick, and the BEDC, with current Vice President Steve Weems presiding. Other members of the BEDC will participate in the meeting as well. The meeting will feature a brief formal presentation at the beginning, including information on the value of economic development for Brunswick, an assessment of the current situation, and a summary of the stated economic development priorities of the Town of Brunswick and the BEDC, which are congruent. The majority of the meeting will be reserved for input from Brunswick residents, businesses and others present, in a discussion forum format. The focus will be on what the Town and the BEDC

should do in the future to facilitate appropriate economic and community development, and what this would look like.

In keeping with the priority status of the Maine Street Station project, the Board discussed various topics pertaining to this project and downtown development. Amtrak passenger service to Brunswick remains a top priority, and various efforts are underway to achieve this goal. These were discussed. Five-year funding (for a lease) from the separate Brunswick Development Corporation (BDC) has put the Town in a position to lease a portion of the main building under construction as a Visitors Center. A third-party operator of this Center should be selected in September. The Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA), which is a potential candidate for this function, should have a full-time Executive Director by then.

There was a preliminary discussion about how to enhance the impact of the BEDC, which essentially is functioning as an advisory board. There was some positive sentiment about the idea of getting BEDC Board members more actively involved on selected economic development priorities, perhaps through an ad-hoc committee or task force structure, which could involve non-Board members as well. Reuse of the Grand City building, downtown parking, in-fill development opportunities, and housing were mentioned as possible subjects. It was decided to seek input on this at the July 30 meeting and put it on a future BEDC Board agenda, probably in September.

It was noted that the Town of Brunswick Planning Board approved the major subdivision plan for the Brunswick Commerce Center in early June. This provides for relatively low-density mixed use development at this location, including fifteen (15) commercial and four (4) residential lots on ninety-four (94) acres between U.S. Route 1 and I-295, bounded by Durham Road on the east. This project was approved unanimously within current zoning provisions, and will provide some badly-needed space for business growth in Brunswick, limited by a 10,000 sq ft maximum building size, the lack of town sewer and water, and other provisions of the existing zoning ordinance and the subdivision approval action.

There was a brief discussion on the search for a permanent Town Manager. The process appears to be on track and the search has been narrowed to six (6) remaining candidates.

End.