

# **Brunswick Economic Development Corporation**



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## **Summary of Meeting Held September 2, 2009**

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

Directors present: Debbie Atwood, Cathy Barter, Gary Brown, Rol Fessenden, Michael Jones, Joanne King, Ed Knox, Judith Long, David Markovchick, Bill Morrell, Doug Niven, Bill Torrey, Steve Weems

Town staff present: Brian Dancause

Invited Guest present: Greg Farr, Executive Director, Brunswick Downtown Association

BEDC President Steve Weems chaired the meeting. He thanked the Directors who attended the BEDC Annual Meeting and public forum held on July 30, and noted the three principal types of activity in which the BEDC can engage, as delineated in its Articles of Incorporation. These are (i) informing, educating and advocating for economic development, (ii) acting as a bridge to the private sector, through both BEDC Board membership and relationships, and (iii) undertaking development projects and initiatives.

Mr. Weems welcomed Greg Farr, the new full-time Executive Director of the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA) to the meeting. Mr. Farr gave an overview of his professional background, the short-term priorities on which he is working for the BDA, and his longer-term vision for the downtown portion of Brunswick (including Pleasant Street). His work will emphasize marketing in many facets, creating a diversified, vibrant mix of downtown businesses in an attractive and inviting environment, providing information to area residents and visitors, and generally promoting the business health of the downtown area and the BDA.

The minutes of both the regularly-scheduled July 1 BEDC meeting and the July 30 Annual Meeting were approved.

A discussion ensued about the BEDC's outreach and communications activities. With a commitment to brief the full Town Council regularly, the idea of getting on the agenda for a Town Council meeting to discuss economic development quarterly was embraced. Reaching out more directly to other established community and economic development groups (e.g. BDA) also was endorsed.

A good portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion about a proposal to establish working committees/task forces as a primary way to conduct the BEDC's business. This discussion was led by BEDC Vice President Rol Fessenden, who had prepared a discussion outline. Recognizing that all the Board members are volunteers (with the exception of town staff), the basic idea is for the BEDC to become more active in the support of certain strategic economic development objectives or subjects where individual Board members have special interest and expertise. This would be accomplished by forming several non-permanent committees, each one devoted to a defined subject (e.g., reuse of the Grand City building, extension of passenger railroad service to Brunswick, existing business retention and expansion). The members of each committee would delve into the committee subject more deeply, develop a work plan, complete specific work tasks and report to the full Board. Committees would function only for as long as necessary, with a variable life-span depending on the topic.

This idea was endorsed by the Board members present. Each Board member gave a preliminary indication about topics of interest to the member. Messrs. Weems, Fessenden and Markovchick were asked to refine the concept and report back to the board at its next meeting.

The next item of business consisted of project updates by David Markovchick pertaining to Naval Air Station Brunswick, the BDA's proposal to become the manager of the Visitor's Center to be established at Maine Street Station, regional cooperation among Freeport, Bath, Brunswick, and Bowdoin College to host the Region I Junior Olympics in 2010, and other pending projects.

Finally, it was decided to change the meeting time of regular meetings of the BEDC to 3:30 – 5:00 pm on the first Wednesday of every month.

End.