

Brunswick Economic Development Corporation



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Summary of Meeting Held June 3, 2009

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brunswick Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was held on Wednesday, June 3, 2009 between approximately 2:40 pm and 4:45 pm.

Directors present: Debbie Atwood, Cathy Barter, Anna Breinich, Gary Brown, Rol Fessenden, John Gerard, Michael Jones, Joanne King, Ed Knox, Judith Long, David Markovchick, Bill Morrell, Bill Torrey, Steve Weems.

Town staff present: Brian Dancause

Guests present: Mike Lyne, JHR Development of Maine LLC; Patricia Quinn, Executive Director, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority.

BEDC Vice President Steve Weems chaired the meeting. He welcomed David Markovchick, Brunswick's new Director of Economic and Community Development, who made a few introductory remarks. David has a blend of private and public experience, including market development and bond financing work with GE Capital and many years in progressively responsible positions at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), in the area of business financing.

After approving the minutes of the previous meeting, the Board engaged in a discussion about the upcoming annual meeting of the BEDC in July. Consistent with the BEDC's Outreach and Communications Commitment, which calls for providing an opportunity for general public input four times per year, it was decided to hold the annual meeting from 7:00 – 9:00 pm on Thursday, July 30 in the Town Council chambers in the old Times Record Building, and televise the meeting. In keeping with the informational component of BEDC's Articles of Incorporation, the Directors decided to hold a meeting with a focus on the "state of the town's economy," the value of economic development in sustaining the Town's municipal and school services, and commentary from the public on appropriate economic and community development for Brunswick. Steve Weems and David Markovchick were tasked with providing more substance to

this concept of the meeting and reporting back at the July 1 BEDC Board of Directors meeting.

The subject of the need for additional approved business park space, priced to support local business expansions and attract new companies to the area, was taken up. Regional possibilities for a fully-serviced business park (with municipal water and sewer) currently are focused on Topsham and Freeport. Topsham Development Inc. (TDI) and an ad hoc subcommittee of the BEDC have drafted a Statement of Principles & Purposes about how costs and revenues could be shared on a multi-town (two or more communities) basis to fund the development of a regional business park. This appears to be a reasonably long-term possibility, which re-use of BNAS would not supersede, due to potential delays in redevelopment of BNAS and its location away from I-295.

Discussion turned to the Brunswick Commerce Center (BCC) as a short-term option, albeit limited by existing planning and zoning considerations. It was noted that the site plan (subdivision request) for this initiative has received sketch plan approval and final Planning Board review is scheduled for June 9. This proposal, as submitted, appears to be consistent with the existing Comprehensive Plan and mixed-use zoning for the area in which it is located. After further discussion the members present unanimously adopted a motion to support the development of the Brunswick Commerce Center, in a manner consistent with the existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Invited guests Mike Lyne and Patricia Quinn then participated in a vigorous discussion about the funding issues of bringing Amtrak train service to Brunswick. During the discussion it was affirmed that this is a top priority of both the Town Council and the BEDC. The issues relate to both capital and operational funding to extend service to Brunswick, and particularly the State's ability and willingness to participate as required by the Federal government. The main issue seems to revolve around how to fund the State's share of any debt service required, and the inevitable operating losses associated with passenger train service. Patricia Quinn pointed out that securing the necessary State funding is a matter of **maintaining** service to Portland, as well as extending it to Brunswick. It also should be emphasized this is an economic development matter of importance to the whole state. The following actions were endorsed:

- The Town would emphasize its strong support for extending Amtrak passenger service to Brunswick, particularly given its pivotal role in the Maine Street Station project and its importance to the rest of the State, when it meets with Governor Baldacci on June 12.
- The BEDC would emphasize its support for extending train service to Brunswick as a key economic development initiative, in whatever ways it can.

End.