

Brunswick Economic Development Corporation



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Summary of Meeting Held May 6, 2009

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brunswick Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009 between approximately 2:40 pm and 4:55 pm.

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

Town staff present: Brian Dancause

BEDC Vice President Steve Weems chaired the meeting. After brief opening remarks by the Chair and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, Steve Weems and other Board members reviewed certain key events since the last BEDC meeting. These included:

- BNAS Briefing – This consisted of a review of information presented to the Brunswick Town Council at its April 6 meeting. The official closure date for the base is May 2011. A buyer for all the Navy housing (over 700 units), both on-base and off-base, in Brunswick and Topsham, has been selected by Balfour Beatty Communities, LLC (BBC), the managing member of Northeast Housing LLC, which owns the houses, which are situated on ground leased from the Navy. The name of the prospective buyer has not been released by BBC.
- SMCC/Advanced Technology & Engineering Center – This also consisted of a review of information presented at the April 6 Town Council meeting. The Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) and the Engineering Department of the University of Maine plan to cooperate to establish a multi-disciplinary campus at BNAS. This would likely mean SMCC would vacate the old Times Record Building.

- Recent resignations of BEDC Directors Mike Ouellet and Ted Crooker – Steve Weems noted these resignations and counsel (Patrick Scully, Esq.) to the Town of Brunswick's statement that an appearance of conflict of interest does not constitute an actual conflict of interest, provided an organization has a clear policy in place about how to handle potential conflicts of interest. The BEDC has a written policy, which is posted on its website.

- Town of Brunswick Economic Development Activities – The Brunswick Town Council adopted Economic Development Goals for 2009 at its April 6 meeting. On April 27, 2009 it appointed David Markovchick Director of Economic & Community Development. Mr. Markovchick will start on June 1.

There was a lengthy discussion about mutual development objectives of the Town Council and the BEDC. There is basic congruence between the current objectives of both groups as evidenced by each group's written, adopted policies. The deletion of one position in Brunswick's Department of Economic and Community Development (from three to two), and the increase in the Town's commitment to the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA) was discussed. A driving motivation for these changes is to assist the BDA in hiring a full-time executive director, which would make the BDA eligible for additional State and Federal funding support for marketing and other development activities. Gary Brown reported on the prospects for funding the extension of Amtrak service from Portland to Brunswick. According to the Maine DOT, it may be five years before the necessary funding is secured. The BEDC Board was in agreement that extending Amtrak service to Brunswick from Portland is critically important, and that the BEDC should do whatever it could to facilitate this outcome.

There were confidential discussions about potential reuse of the Grand City building, a large potential manufacturing company that could have interest in locating a plant on the BNAS property, a potential regional business park initiative in a neighboring community, and other business expansion possibilities for Brunswick.

With limited time available for discussion, Steve Weems noted the cash assets held by the separate Brunswick Development Corporation (BDC), and invited discussion about how to influence the wise use of these funds for economic development. John Gerard noted the historic practice of the BEDC (and its predecessor organization) taking the lead on development projects and making recommendations to the BDC about how to use its funds. The BEDC Board took no action as a result of this preliminary discussion.

End.