

Brunswick Economic Development Corporation



28 Federal Street
Brunswick, ME 04011
Phone: 207-721-0292
Fax: 207-725-6663

www.brunswickbiz.org

Summary of Meeting Held January 7, 2009

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brunswick Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was held on Wednesday, January 7, 2009 between approximately 2:30 pm to 4:45 pm.

Directors Present: Debbie Atwood, Cathy Barter, Anna Breinich, Gary Brown, Ted Crooker, Rol Fessenden, Joanne King, Bill Morrell, Mike Ouellet, Bill Torrey, Steve Weems.

Town Staff Present: Brian Dancause

After welcoming Councilor Debbie Atwood to the BEDC Board and conducting preliminary business, there was a brief discussion about the work of the Nominating Committee, chaired by Cathy Barter, to develop a slate of candidates for the open seats (3) on the Board of Directors. The BEDC intends to add Directors as soon as practical, with Town Council concurrence. Ms. Barter reported the Nominating Committee is interviewing Board candidates and intends to have recommendations for the February meeting.

Steve Weems led a discussion about the roundtable discussion with the Brunswick Town Council on December 18, 2008. There was a consensus among the Directors present this was a positive event, and an acknowledgement it would be vitally important to follow through on the BEDC's Outreach & Communications Commitment dated December 3, 2008. Mr. Weems agreed to prepare a more detailed implementation plan for consideration at the February BEDC meeting. The importance of having an open dialogue with the community at large about community and economic development was underscored.

After further discussion, the Board by unanimous action of the members present (Anna Breinich abstaining) passed a motion to send a letter to the Town Council to (i) affirm the BEDC's view that appropriate community and economic development in Brunswick is an urgent current priority, requiring concerted action by the Town Council and BEDC working together, (ii) confirm the BEDC's commitment to work in closest coordination with the Town Council, and (iii)

identify three actions the BEDC considers of paramount importance deserving immediate attention. These actions are:

1. Hire a new Development Director as soon as possible.
2. Hold a joint Town Council/BEDC public workshop on community and economic development priorities.
3. Establish a Community & Economic Development Emergency Response Team to deal with current business needs and overtures, across Brunswick.

A copy of the letter, subsequently drafted and sent on January 9, 2009, is attached.

There was a highly confidential discussion about current and potential vacant retail spaces in Brunswick, particularly in the downtown and at 128 Maine Street (Grand City location), and known prospects for vacant space. The outlook for additional vacancies is alarming. Gary Brown noted staff assignments within the Department of Community and Economic Development.

There was a preliminary discussion about an initiative of JHR Development of Maine, LLC, the developer of Maine Street Station, to find a master lessee for some of the quasi-public space at Maine Street Station. No action was taken about this idea.

There was a discussion about various activities aimed at developing a regional business park, particularly informal discussions currently being held between Topsham Development Incorporated (TDI) and BEDC. It is expected that various discussions of this nature will continue, and the participants will report back to the full Board as appropriate. Key elements of these discussions are likely to be strictly confidential. In this context Ted Crooker emphasized the value of thinking long-term and strategically about the area's road plan, noting how the greater Portland area has benefitted from this type of approach. Ms. Breinich noted how this ties into the Brunswick Comprehensive Plan.

There was a further update on selected, confidential business growth opportunities, and how these could be supported.

End.