

**Economic Development Committee  
February 22, 2024 - Final**

**Present:** Ron Rzasa (Chair), John Pieper, Gerald Lins, Marion Rzasa, Chele Hood, Doreen Monahan, and Fran Shippee (BOS Representative)

**Absent:** Erin Soltys

**Guest:** Roland Vollbehrr

**Meeting Called to Order at 6:05PM**

**Presiding:** Ron Rzasa

**Secretary Report**

The Jan. 25, 2024, minutes were unanimously approved.

**New Member:** Doreen Monahan was sworn in by Fran Shippee at the meeting.

**Old Business**

1. **Chesterfield Creative Artisan Fair, Sat. April 27, 10A – 2P:** Twenty-two vendors have been confirmed with two on the waitlist. Five of these vendors are new. If two people can share a table, the waitlist can be cleared.
  - a. In March, Chele will send out notices to all the participants. She will include an invitation to them about having their business card or an item for display at the Business Expo.
  - b. Tricia has agreed to arrange the advertising once more.
  - c. End Event: A discussion with the vendors is proposed to see how they want to move forward. It is important that we get their input.
  - d. Dream item: A gallery featuring their items on consignment in a business like a coffee shop.
  - e. Set up will be on Friday starting at 4:30pm
2. **American Legion Building:** Jeff Scott sent his last email to Lester Fairbanks. There is still no reply. This solution to childcare issues appears over with negative results.
3. **Chesterfield Revitalization Group (CRG):** Representatives from the group attended the recent **BRAC** (Brownfield Remediation Action Committee) meeting. They noted that five other towns were also in attendance: Hinsdale, New Ipswich, Swanzey, Peterborough, and Winchester. Most of them had a paid staff member there. We are lucky to have such dedicated volunteers.
  - a. Representatives of the CRG attended the Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> BOS meeting to request a *Letter of Recommendation* from the BOS in favor of the Property Assessment. This is necessary for the EPA and other organizations to continue aiding the town and opens the way for possible grants. The BOS appeared in favor but will consult with the town lawyer before signing.
  - b. It should be noted that by doing nothing, the town assumes some risk. The building is an attractive nuisance. If it falls down, the town will become engaged in lengthy litigation.
  - c. Roland Volbehrr addressed the committee about using the building as a storage facility and possibly purchasing it and repairing the roof. He was advised that in doing so he would assume liability. Also, the committee outlined the complicated process the town has already gone through over the past 10+ years, and the three phases required to bring Brownfield's properties back to a functional part of the community. It is critical that the assessment be done first. Plus, there is a special procedure to follow when entering a Brownfield property

- and it is limited to qualified personnel. He appreciated the input and will attend the Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> CRG meeting.
- d. The Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> presentation at the Town Hall was attended by approximately 40 people with an additional 7-8 via zoom. Julianna's talk was well received. Thanks to all the volunteers.
4. **Budget:** The Budget committee recommended that the EDC Budget approved by the BOS be cut from \$3,786 to \$3,220, a reduction of \$566. They will not recommend Warrant Article 36, the \$10,000 CRG funding.
- a. CRG members are working on how to present their case at the Town Meeting and make the Motion to put it back into the budget. Networking at the Meet the Candidate event is recommended.
  - b. The EDC budget reduction is manageable. But the CRG monies are essential as it is imperative that the town show support for this project. Without it, the town will lose the backing of the BRAC and grant funding which is critical for moving the project forward. This includes addressing the Town's liability issue, assessing the property, clean-up (or cap and tear down), with the final goal of moving it from attractive nuisance to functional and back on the tax roll.
    - i. While speaking on behalf of the CRG, it should be noted that the EDC has done significant work for the town. This includes researching childcare alternatives, working towards Senior Housing, the organizing Artisan Expos (all well received and attended) and a future Business Expo, plus the extensive time spent speaking and advising potential residents and businesses.
5. **Chesterfield Business Expo – April 6<sup>th</sup> 9AM – 2PM:** The event has 18 vendors. Notice will go out in Facebook again.
- a. Jeff is working on the Banner. Donna is working on a graphic to go onto the town calendar.
  - b. Table space should be available to businesses that can't be physically present. They can have a sample item to display or their business cards.
  - c. Jeff will be asked to contact Carter Concrete and Rawson Construction to see if they wish to participate.
6. **Childcare:** Doreen investigated some local towns about how they provide childcare. This included Westmoreland, Hinsdale, Alstead, Walpole, Marlborough, and Harrisville. All of them depend on out-of-town childcare or have small private home care facilities. Only Harrisville had a significant childcare center which is non-profit and independent. In Massachusetts, Bernardston referred her to Northfield. It does not appear any town in our region assists with childcare. She was asked to investigate in Vermont.

**Public Comment:** See #3, c

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:10PM**

**Next Meeting:**

**March 14, 2024  
Town Hall Offices – 6pm  
McKeon Room**

**Respectfully submitted by  
Donna Roscoe, Secretary,  
Feb. 22, 2024**