

**FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
TUESDAY, July 29, 2014, 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM  
Freeport Community Center  
MINUTES**

**1. The meeting convened at 7:35 AM**

**In attendance:** Drew Sachs, Wendy Caisse, David Latulippe, Adam Nappi, Ed Bradley, Mary Hitt-Davis, Mark Malone, Candice Rinaldi, Sarah Tracy.

**Absent:** Corey Bouyea, Chip Gray, Jim Cassida, Betsy Ruff, Peter Troast, Peter Joseph

**2. Introductory comments**

Drew welcomed the board. He noted that there was a long agenda to get through, and recommended starting with the consent agenda and administrative matters.

**3. Consent Agenda Items:**

**1. Approval of MINUTES of June 25, 2014 meeting**

**2. Acceptance of FINANCIAL STATEMENT for period ending June 30, 2014.**

Keith mentioned that even though June 30 is the end of the fiscal year, a few items on the FY2014 budget had not been closed, because they are town-related, and the town has not yet closed FY2014. Among these were the payment for phone service, postage costs, and the remaining \$6,500 of the FY2014 allocation. He said that a final FY2014 financial report would be available at the next meeting, along with a brief report on the first month of FY2015. Ed asked about the FY2014 allocation for part-time assistance. Keith explained that the part-time assistant had left the position due to childcare concerns, and had not worked 10 months of the fiscal year. David moved approval of the consent agenda items, and Wendy seconded. The vote was unanimous of those present and voting.

**4. Brief Administrative Matters:**

**1. Re-election of Betsy Ruff, Chip Gray and Corey Bouyea**

Keith explained that Betsy, Chip and Corey each had terms which expired in June, with the close of the fiscal year. They had all indicated a willingness to serve another term, and that historically, when sitting board members were interested in continuing, the board elected them. Sarah asked about term limits, and suggested that the board consider term limits. Other town boards and committees, she noted, were considering term limits as a way of getting new community members involved, and bringing fresh ideas to the board. Drew replied that on an economic development board, however, the institutional knowledge and experience becomes more valuable, as there is a learning curve. However, he indicated that it should be discussed at a future board meeting, and asked Keith to put the question of term limits on a future agenda. Mark moved and Candice seconded the re-election of the entire panel. The vote was unanimous of those present and voting.

**2. Code of Ethics/Conflicts of Interest Forms**

Keith explained that the by-laws required all board members to sign a Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest policy at the beginning of each fiscal year. Ed pointed out that the Code of Ethics policy stated that FEDC should "represent the interests of all people (e.g., business owners, managers and property owners)" and stated that the parenthetical made it sound as though we were only representing those particular members of the community. Keith agreed, and pointed out that these policies had not been updated or revised since 2006. The board favored a revision to delete the parenthetical, and that the policy should state the FEDC should represent the interests of "all people." Drew asked Keith to make sure that revision appeared on future versions of this policy.

**5. Economic Development Report**

Keith informed the board that the Kendall Tavern had been re-opened under new ownership, and that the Chamber had celebrated their grand re-opening the previous week. He said that the new owners were excited to be a part of the Freeport community, and he encouraged everyone to stop by and welcome them. He also mentioned that Shady Glen Nursery had opened in the adjacent property, and the Chamber had held a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony for them, as well. He complimented the owners on the beautiful landscape improvements to the property, and again, encouraged the board members to visit. He mentioned that he had recently worked with Amy Chiu, owner of Core Fitness on Route 1 South, who had been seeking site location help, and had been considering a move out of town. Keith reported that she had recently signed a lease for

space at 45 Mallet Drive, and was excited to be staying in town, and he also thanked Mary for referring Amy to him for assistance. Mary stated that Amy had been having difficulty in getting assistance from the real estate community, and was very happy that FEDC was available to help her understand her options in Freeport. The board encouraged Keith to continue the good work.

Keith stated that Chip Gray (unable to attend this meeting) had been contacted by a Jobs for Maine Graduates representative Freeport Middle School, seeking help in setting up a job shadowing program for students.

Following-up on a suggestion from the June meeting, he suggested that this would be a very good contact for FEDC to make to be a more active player in the schools. The board agreed that this was an excellent opportunity to do some heavy-lifting on behalf of the schools, and to use business (and Chamber) contacts to help make the much-needed connections between the job shadowing program and local businesses. David suggested reaching out to Dede Bennell at the high school and to expand the program to involve high school students, as well. The board encouraged Keith to spend some time developing this.

Also following-up on an item that had been discussed at the June meeting, Keith mentioned that the Envision Maine Summit would be coming to Freeport in September, and asked David to speak to the suggestion that FEDC play some larger role in the conference. David stated that the conference would bring a group of business leaders, policy-makers and entrepreneurs to Freeport. He suggested that FEDC, in collaboration with the Chamber and FreeportUSA, could sponsor and host a meet-and-greet on the evening before the conference for those arriving in Freeport for the conference. It would not require any costs, but perhaps would eat up some of Keith's time in planning, coordinating and organizing the event. David reminded the board that Vision 2025 called for marketing Freeport to non-retail business owners and creative entrepreneurs as a place to begin or locate their business, and this event provided a unique opportunities to do some of that marketing. The board agreed, and encouraged Keith to work with David and the Envision Maine board, as well as with the Chamber and FreeportUSA to organize the event.

## **6. Marketing Projects/Update**

Keith reminded the board that a marketing plan had been developed last year, and that the board had sent a clear message that marketing should be a large part of FEDC's activities for this year. With that in mind, he said that roughly once each quarter, he would be updating the board on his marketing activities. First, he reported that the Chamber was considering a series of "lunch-and-learn" or other information sessions on Freeport, and had asked Keith to be a presenter at one or more of these sessions. He suggested that a session on Freeport's opportunities and permitting process (offered for continuing real estate credit) would attract the real estate brokerage community to Freeport, and the Chamber had reacted positively to that idea. With regard to direct marketing materials, Keith reported that he had met with Kelly at FreeportUSA and that she had agreed to give some assistance the particulars about marketing, and possibly assist (to some degree) with content. Keith said he was encouraged by her cooperative attitude. Keith also mentioned that he had, at business' requests, created some economic and demographic statistical reports. He had received feedback that this data is helpful and important to regional and national retailers, who have reporting obligations to district offices, etc. With that in mind, he suggested marketing FEDC's services for market and other data research. Keith stated that he and Drew had also discussed whether or not these services should be revenue-generating. Wendy suggested, based on her experience in consulting, that standard reports on commonly-requested data could be made available on the website for a set fee, which could be paid via the internet with a credit card, and the reports downloaded. Such a system would make information readily available for use, and would assign a value to it. Custom reports could be generated at request, and for higher fees. Drew suggested that Keith prepare a one-sheet proposal on how handle FEDC research services for the boards consideration at a future meeting, and to circulate it prior to the meeting so that the board could be prepared to comment. Keith agreed.

## **7. Discussion about FEDC "Quarterly Reports" to the Council**

Keith reminded the board that he had been making economic development reports to the council on a quarterly basis, at the council's request. However, he had serious concerns about whether or not the information he had been presenting to the council was helpful and informative for them. Instead, it seemed that his appearance had become a distraction to the council. Keith reported that he had met with Chairman Hendricks, who suggested that much of the reporting on FEDC's activities should be done through the council liaison, Sarah Tracy, at the "Information Exchange" portion of the town council agenda, and other information could be shared with the council on paper, via memorandums. In the event that Keith felt it necessary to appear before the council, he suggested having board members present. Sarah disagreed that Keith's quarterly reports should cease, and indicated that she found the information he provided to be interesting and useful. She encouraged Keith to communicate with her on what information he would like her to report during "information exchange," and indicated that Councilor Hendricks' suggestions may have been made in the interest of expediency, but did not reflect the desire of the entire council. The board agreed that board member presence at these reports would be a change worth pursuing, either way. They encouraged Keith to reach out to the board before scheduling presentations and appearances before the council to see who would be willing to attend.

## **8. FEDC and Freeport Arts & Cultural Center**

Keith mentioned that he had been contacted by a few different arts organizations in towns, each inquiring about having an “arts center” in town that could serve as an attraction for visitors, a revenue-generator for local artists, and as a home, office and venue for these local organizations. He reported that Ed had been working on this idea, and asked Keith to put it on the agenda for discussion. Ed gave some background on the arts center concept in Freeport. Adam commented that the idea had surfaced in Board discussions, in different forms many times over the last few years. Ed stated that what the arts organizations needed is a non-interested party (who would not be an owner or user of the space) to assist in the development of the concept, to determine if there is a critical mass, to help foster cooperation, and to help structure the organization that would take control of the center. He thought that FEDC could be uniquely positioned to play this role, and thought that Keith’s skills and experience would make him a good candidate. He asked if it were appropriate to seek the board’s approval for Keith to spend significant time on this in the coming weeks and months. The board discussed the role FEDC should play, and agreed that FEDC would not be an owner, landlord or financial stakeholder. Drew asked Ed to elaborate on the next steps, and how FEDC could play a role. Ed suggested that a meeting should take place between different members of the arts community in Freeport, to assess whether or not the “critical mass” exists, and to assess each groups interest in collaborating, and to determine what a facility might look like. David spoke about an artists’ studio and living space that had been built in Portland, and suggested that there were ways to make such facilities work. Mark spoke about Chris Thompson, who had developed a “maker’s space” in Portland, and suggested that he might be a valuable resource for information for Keith, when the time came. Following the initial discussions, and assuming further pursuit of the project is warranted, similar meetings would need to take place to determine needs, feasibility, site location, organizational structure, finances, etc. Ed believed that FEDC could be an excellent host and facilitator for all of these conversations. Drew volunteered that he had facilitated many such collaborative discussions as part of his career, and Mary said the same. The board encouraged Keith to begin coordinating a discussion between the arts organizations in town, and to reach out to board members for assistance on facilitating these meetings, if it is needed. Drew also suggested that the boundaries of FEDC’s involvement should be very clearly defined.

## **9. Adjourn**

Drew asked if any other board members had information to share. Mark suggested that the “Economic Development Report” section of the agenda should be expanded. He mentioned that he had heard a few bits of information about Freeport, including that Bob O’Donnell’s property on Route 1 south would be going on to the market. Drew suggested that the board discuss this property and its developable potential be discussed at a future meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 9:30**