

**FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
TUESDAY, May 19, 2015, 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM  
Freeport Community Center  
MINUTES**

**1. The meeting convened at 7:32 AM**

**In attendance:** Jim Cassida, Wendy Caisse, Candice Rinaldi, Zane Shatzer, Adam Nappi, Betsy Ruff, Ed Bradley, Mary Davis, Dave Latulippe, Andy Kull, Kristina Egan

**Absent:** Chip Gray, Mark Malone, Peter Troast, Peter Joseph

**Guests:** Bill Rixon, Elizabeth Guffey, Jane Bradley

**2. Introductory comments**

Jim thanked everyone for coming. He mentioned that we would be having a meeting in June, but we had not yet reserved a space for that meeting. Board members made some suggestions for locations. Jim welcomed members of the group that has been working on the exploration of a Freeport Arts and Cultural Center.

**3. Presentation from members of the Freeport Arts & Cultural Center Exploration Group**

Ed spoke on behalf of the group. He recapped the public meeting which the group had organized and held on April 28<sup>th</sup>. He thanked Bow Street Market, Azure Café and Coffee By Design for contributing to the meeting by providing light refreshments. He also thanked Carol Wishcamper, who did an excellent job of preparing the group for the meeting, and also served as the meeting facilitator. Ed felt that the question of whether or not there was support for an arts center in Freeport was answered, resoundingly yes. Approximately 55 people attended the meeting. Some were artists and/or members of the arts community. Some were members of the public who were interested in the concept of an arts center. The question of “what is it?” was also addressed at the meeting. The participants showed support for three general concepts: 1) an arts center as a hub of information (called the “kiosk” concept), 2) the arts center as a physical space for exhibition and performance, and 3) the arts center as a place to offer education/experience and exposure to art for the community. The group also asked for volunteers at the meeting – those who were interested in being a part of the process going forward. With these new volunteers a new working group was constituted and met for the first meeting in early May. The group outlined a process for moving forward that would explore all three concepts described above. They also divided into smaller committees to explore the following topics: 1) financing, 2) information and outreach, 3) organization, and 4) planning. Ed mentioned that Keith’s involvement going forward would be substantial. Keith had been asked to keep an eye on properties which might be suitable for any of the concepts described above, and he had also been placed on the organization committee, which would be exploring bringing a formal leadership structure together for this effort. Ed also proposed that FEDC make a small financial allocation to the effort, which would be matched by the Freeport Players and used as leverage to seek additional funds from grants or from local businesses, etc. Jim asked whether Ed felt the community had been reached, or if they were only hearing from a handful of local artists. Ed described the public nature of the group’s activities, and also mentioned that the interview process (early on) included a wide array of artists and non-artists. Board members asked about Keith’s role thus far. Keith described the initial discussions at the FEDC board level, and his involvement with the effort to date. He reminded the board that he has many responsibilities and projects other than this one. Betsy pointed out that the question of dedicating Keith’s time to this was one of priorities for FEDC. Mary agreed. Andy suggested that this project should go forward with an eye on how it serves as an economic development and economic activity driver. Dave described it as a “differentiator” for Freeport – something that would make Freeport unique and interesting and diversify the experience in town for residents and visitors alike. Jim added that there is an income-generation aspect to the project, not only for artists, but also for the arts community/organization being formed. Andy and Zane suggested that there should be a clearer definition of Keith’s role and job duties in this project. Ed spoke to what he anticipated Keith would have to do as part of the organization committee. He did not think it would be an expansion of Keith’s time above what he is currently dedicating to this project. Dave supported the idea of Keith being a facilitator in the process, but keeping some distance between FEDC and the arts organization. Jim asked about the request for funding from FEDC. Ed said that the finance committee for this arts center would come back to the board with a more formal request based on need at a future meeting.

**4. Consent Agenda Items:**

**1. Approval of MINUTES of April 28, 2015 meeting**

**2. Acceptance of FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the period ending April 30, 2015**

Wendy moved and Adam seconded the consent agenda. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**5. Economic Development Report**

Keith had nothing to add to his written report. Adam asked if there had been any activity at either the lot owned by Thos. Moser Furniture at the corner of West and Main Street, or the building owned by Chilton's Furniture on Lower Main. Keith gave a brief history of both sites, and said that there has been little activity for either site in the last few months.

**6. FEDC FY2016 Budget Discussion - Marketing**

Keith reminded the board that at the April 28 meeting, the board had raised questions about the proposed FY2016 budget and marketing. In response, Keith prepared a "special projects budget" page to reflect the \$10,000 allocated for marketing in FY2015, and his intention to use that allocation over multiple fiscal years to implement the specialty foods marketing plan he had presented to the board in November, 2014. Keith gave the board background on the marketing issue: In 2013, he met with Mark Malone and Peter Troast to develop a preliminary marketing plan for FEDC. The plan was broad in scope, and suggested tactics aimed at improving FEDC's public image, marketing Freeport to new and existing businesses, and developing a presence in the Maine real estate and development community. Building from the suggestions in Vision 2025, Keith developed the specialty foods marketing concept as a more direct and specific marketing campaign. Wendy said that the question about marketing at FEDC has always been one about message: are we marketing Freeport? FEDC? Or something else? And to whom? Adam said that any effort should be supported by Vision 2025 as well as by FEDC's mission, and it should also be something measurable, so that we can gauge its success. He also suggested that some of the more broad suggestions in the 2013 marketing plan could be applied to the specialty foods marketing effort. For example, he recommended that FEDC have a presence at MEREDA and MGFPA events, and have marketing materials prepared which present Freeport as an ideal location for specialty food producers to grow their brand. Zane pointed out that what Freeport has to offer is the millions of shoppers and visitors, and that it's really a food retailing plan, if retailers are interested in expanding their brand recognition. Keith discussed the Maine Craft Distilleries location as an example of a retail storefront that is designed for specific brand recognition and expansion. Jim suggested that Keith prepare a more detailed budget with some of the expenses he anticipates for marketing and present it to the board in June. Keith agreed.

**7. Follow-up on Sewer District Discussion on April 28**

Keith said that following Lee Arris' presentation at the last meeting, there seemed to be some energy behind the idea of putting together a group of FEDC board members and FSD Trustees to discuss the issue of the connection/capacity fee structure. He asked for volunteers to be a part of this small group discussion. Jim Cassida and Dave Latulippe volunteered. Wendy Caisse volunteered to be an alternate in case either Jim or David could not make the meeting. Keith thanked them, and said he would be in contact with Lee Arris to see if the trustees were ready to meet, and to get some potential meeting times.

**8. Executive Session**

The board went into executive session at 8:55. The board came out of executive session at 9:05. Jim moved and Adam seconded an increase in the executive director's salary from \$57,000 to \$60,000. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting. Keith thanked the board. Jim asked Keith to change the proposed FY2016 budget to reflect the increase, and to provide for the increase in expenses out of reserve funds. Keith mentioned that in the past, he had a performance review in which the board provided feedback to him. He thought that would be valuable. The board agreed. Mary volunteered to lead the effort on behalf of the board.

**9. The meeting adjourned at 9:10**