

**FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**TUESDAY, June 30, 2020 7:30 AM**  
**Web Meeting via Zoom**  
**MINUTES**

**1. Meeting convened at 7:35 AM**

**In attendance:** Mary Davis, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Ed Bradley, Mark Malone, Candice Rinaldi, Caleb Stephens, Tawni Whitney

**Not attending:** Dan Bacon, Chip Gray, David Lockman, Betsy Ruff, Jim Cassida, James Hendricks, Peter Joseph

**Guests:** Dan Piltch, Nikki Yanok, Veronika Carlson, Linda Bean

**2. Introductory comments**

Mary welcomed everyone. She noted that the board has been quite busy, and mentioned work on the Main Street road closure, loan program, and other good things.

**3. DISCUSSION: Strategic Direction for Downtown with Linda Bean and Veronika Carlson**

Mary welcomed Linda and Veronika, and asked the board members to introduce themselves. Veronika and Linda also introduced themselves. Linda began by speaking about her downtown properties, and her interest in Freeport, including her family history and the south end of Main Street. At 31 Main Street, the Antiques Emporium, she said that the sales there had been doing very well, and had plans to expand to including an auction house for special antiques. She spoke about her effort to purchase the GAP and Lobster Cooker/Banana Republic properties, and how it seemed to meet with the coinciding need of the historical society for new archival storage space. She introduced Veronika as her “right hand” and “successor” to her business ventures. Veronika gave some of her background, growing up in Downeast Maine and her work with Linda. Ed said that much of what FEDC has talked about in the abstract, Linda had been making a reality. Keith talked about other activity at the Tavern and at 31 Main street, on which he had been working over the last few weeks, and invited Veronika to summarize those projects. Veronika said that they are exploring uses at the former Camden National bank ATM booth, and also some enhancements at the south end of Main Street. Mary talked about FEDC’s visioning process in 2018-19, which focused on “experiential” for Main Street and emphasized the relationship with the town to try and implement some of these changes. She also spoke about the renewed strategic thinking effort which the council had supported. Linda Bean spoke about LL Bean’s contribution to downtown, which is significant. She said L.L. Bean had recently sold a parking lot to a housing developer at very favorable terms, recognizing the value of having new, dense residential in the downtown. She also mentioned the company’s control of the former Leon Leonwood Bean residence on Holbrook Street, and the art collection which her son Nathan coordinates. Mark said that from a broker’s standpoint, the 31 Main Street development does not make a quality “anchor tenant” because antiques aren’t seen as traffic generators, like traditional retail. Linda responded that she is thinking more about her assets and putting them into service, but isn’t interested in investing in commercial rental properties for retail. She said that the hospitality/restaurant industry is more in her wheelhouse. Linda talked about her restaurants and the lobster industry, and mentioned that Linda Beans Lobster Co. is now fully employee-owned. Mary thanked them for their participation in the meeting, and also thanked L.L. Bean for their participation in the street closure. Linda said she was aware of the street closing concept, and said it seemed like a fun idea. The board thanked Linda and Veronika, and Linda thanked the board for their leadership on these issues.

**4. Update on COVID-19 related Response and Business Assistance**

**a. Freeport COVID-19 Loan Program**

**b. Main Street Vehicular Traffic Closure Planning**

On the loan program, Mary asked Dan Piltch to summarize some of the activity. Dan said that thus far, 1 loan has been funded to a local business, and a second application was being considered and expected to be funded, pending some more documentation. Mary praised the council for supporting this effort and funding the loan fund. On Main Street closure, Mary invited Tawni to give an update. Tawni said that a lot of work has been done, and that the first weekend of actual closure would be the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. She also pointed out that the need to close Main Street to vehicular traffic to bring more activity began long before COVID. Mary added that the commitment for road closure is for 2 weeks, and the idea is to measure performance and develop a response.

**5. Consent Agenda**

**a. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting on May 26, 2020**

**b. Acceptance of Financial Report for Period ending May 31, 2020**

Ed moved and Leanne seconded the consent agenda items. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**6. Executive Director's Report**

Keith referred to his written report. Mark asked about new development. Keith said that there were some new projects in the works, but that a lot of the projects that were existing at the time of COVID shutdown have begun to come back with renewed energy to proceed, which is a good trend. Keith talked about residential development proposals, including downtown. Mark asked about the shift in taxes from commercial to residential in town. Keith agreed that there had been a shift in place prior to COVID, since residential values had been more stable (and increasing), and commercial property owners had been complaining about their valuations prior to COVID. Keith said that Bob Konczal, town tax assessor, had been working on that issue, and would be getting new data to work with. Keith said that there might be a town-wide revaluation in the future, depending on the results of that data. Leanne asked for more details on the more recent housing project. Keith said that they had still interested but would need a zoning ordinance amendment. Leanne asked if the downtown housing group could help. Keith said he would engage them. Mary asked about the housing project on Desert Road. Keith said that Caroline Pelletier had been making an effort to get the back to the board for approvals. Keith said he would check with Caroline for the status of this project.

**7. FEDC Budget for FY2021**

Keith said that he had presented the budget in the May meeting, and that while the board had no immediate concerns, they wanted to wait until the June meeting to finalize a vote. Keith showed the updates to the projected FY2020 costs, and the budget request for FY2021. Mary asked if the board had any questions. Leanne moved and Candice seconded approval of the proposed FY2021 budget. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**8. FEDC Board Member Re-Election: Ed Bradley, Chip Gray, Mary Davis**

Keith said that he and/or Mary had all been contacted and were willing to continue on for an additional term. Leanne moved and Caleb seconded the entire panel. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**9. Recognition of Outgoing Board Member: Betsy Ruff**

Mary, Keith and Tawni spoke to Betsy's current situation, which does not lend itself to continuing on the board. Mary said that Betsy still has a desire to stay involved and asked to please reach out if she could ever be of assistance. The board stated their appreciation for Betsy's service to the board, and to Freeport.

**10. Review of Quarry Ridge Affordable Housing TIF**

Keith presented the TIF development program and CEA to the board. He said that the town council would be holding a public hearing on this proposed TIF at their next meeting (July 7) and said that as per the town's TIF policy, the board would have to make a recommendation. Keith said that the residential group (Leanne, Dan and Nikki) had considered this TIF earlier this year, and had concluded that this project would be a great, cost-effective way for the town to participate with the Housing Trust to develop/retain some affordable units close to downtown, but that the TIF itself proposes no new development, infrastructure, or any municipal TIF funded projects/goals. The board agreed to adopt that as its recommendation. Leanne moved and Mark seconded. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

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

**Future Board Meetings:**

July 28  
August 25  
September 29  
October 27  
December 1  
January 26

February 23  
March 30  
April 27  
May 25  
June 29