

FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TUESDAY, January 26 2021 7:30 AM
Via Zoom
MINUTES

1. The meeting began at 7:33 AM

Attending: Mary Davis, Dan Bacon, Rebecca Lizotte, Sarah Tracy, Nikki Yanok, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Jim Cassida, David Lockman, Mark Malone, Chip Gray, Caleb Stephens, Tawni Whitney

Not Attending: Candice Rinaldi, Jim Hendricks, Peter Joseph

Guest: Dan Piltch

2. Introductory comments

Mary welcomed everyone and thanked them for their work and participation.

3. Consent Agenda Items:

1. Approval of MINUTES of January 7 2021 meeting

2. Acceptance of Financial Report for Period Ending December 31, 2020

Mary suggested a correction: Nikki Yanok should be indicated as attending the Jan 7 meeting on the minutes. Keith apologized for the oversight. David moved acceptance of the consent agenda with that revision. Leanne seconded. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

4. Director's Update (Written Reports)

1. Metrics Dashboard

Keith presented a new dashboard with economic development data and asked the board for feedback on the data points, which will be used internally as well as externally, as a communication point to the community and others. Mark gave some feedback on the lease rates data, and suggested that using lease rates from realtor listings would work for the purposes of the dashboard. Keith also discussed the availability of retail sales tax data and said that it may be only possible to track it going forward on an annual basis at the local level. Chip said he would try to contact someone at the state level to get better data. Keith thanked some local businesses for volunteering to provide data that will be used to create a new aggregate economic activity index. Dan B. suggested adding "new square footage" and changed use/redeveloped square footage as other important measures. Sarah suggested that this document be converted to something that could be presented in a graphic form on the website. Keith said that this was the plan, once the form and metrics are solidified.

2. Project Updates

Keith presented his written report, and short summaries of on-going development projects that the board has been monitoring for months. Dave corrected that the Beacon residences project have begun site work. Keith said that he appreciates additions and corrections to the list, and asked the board to please let him know if they see anything else that needs updating. Mary asked that this be on the agenda for the next meeting, as well.

5. Review of Draft FY2022 FEDC Budget

Mary announced that the annual FEDC workshop with the council would be taking place on Tuesday, March 9. She explained the approach to this year's budget, which includes our normal annual expenses, and also a section which includes some projects for Freeport. Mary explained that the Freeport projects are included on the document to highlight some of the activities which FEDC is driving for the town, and to bring conversation to the cost items for those projects, including the data/fiscal impact analysis project and the II and III phases of the downtown strategic planning/visioning project. It also included \$5,000 for grant writing and research, and Sarah asked for more information about that item. Mary explained that the board already approved an expenditure (in FY2021) for \$2,500 to pay for a grant seeker to do some research and identify some high priority grant opportunities that would help us fund some of the community work we are undertaking. The additional \$5,000 would be for engaging someone to write and pursue those grants. Sarah said that we should be prepared to answer why Keith cannot take on that role. Sarah also said that the downtown vision should not be presented by FEDC on the same page as its ordinary budget, but should instead be proposed as an item to be included in the town's capital plan. The board agreed and Keith suggested that if it were to be included in the capital plan, it would be best if it were proposed by the council. With regard to the fiscal impact study, Sarah suggested that some portion of funds from FEDC should be dedicated to the project, and then seek whatever remainder

(following responses to an RFP) from the council, since the plan will have value to the comprehensive planning process and to the planning board. Rebecca asked whether FEDC or the town would be the recipient of grant funds. Keith said that it depends on eligibility for the grant, and it may be that the application be submitted as co-applicants between the town and FEDC. It's important to know whose portion of costs (on projects where the costs are shared) the grant funding will offset. Mary said that the budget would be updated and re-submitted for consideration at the February board meeting which would still give some time for fine-tuning prior to the March 9 workshop.

6. Discussion: FEDC Mission Values, Principles and Goals

Mary presented a previous Values/Principles document from 2007, and other goals documents. She spoke about FEDC's accomplishments for 2020. She presented a proposed goals document for FY2021 and asked for the board's feedback. Rebecca asked if these documents could be made available via a Google Drive file. Mary said that this document would be put in a Google Doc so that board members could make their own revisions and suggestions. Mary said that it would also come back for discussion for February.

7. Strategic Agenda

1. Experiential/Coordinated Marketing: Street Gang Update

Mary asked Tawni to give an update on street gang activities. She said that the effort continues to fill spaces with temporary users and window displays.

2. Barriers/Diversification: Residential Group Update

Keith and Leanne updated the board on the process of getting proposal for zoning ordinance changes through the planning board. Leanne announced that a public hearing would be taking place on February 10, and encouraged board members to make comments. Keith said that so far the feedback from the board and community has been very positive, but that some additional input is always welcomed.

3. Update on Downtown Vision Plan Process

Mary referred to documents on the schedule for Phase I. She said that the first meeting of the "community connectors" would be Thursday. She described the community connectors as "amplifiers" to make sure that the town is engaged at all constituency levels. She showed the schedule for the other committees groups who were critical to the process and how they would be meeting and managing the work.

8. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 AM