

Eastport Economic Development Committee

Minutes March 28, 2022

1PM Port Authority Building

Present: Michael Morse, Jerry Morrison, Kevin Raye, Rayett Cooper, Laura Stanczyk, Manuel Moreno, Chris Gardner

Billy Boone and Jeanne Peacock (city liaisons) Vicki Rusbult (EMDC), Kate Devonshire(ex-officio)

1. The March 7 meeting minutes were accepted. (Motion, Gardner, second Raye) Passed. 8-0

2. Vicki Rusbult reported on **the remaining funds of the City Economic Dev grant** from EMDC. She will confer with the accountant to ascertain the fund balance.

She will report back to Michael or Jeanne by days end, if possible. Uses of the funds are marketing projects and engineering studies. The EEC needs to be invoiced the funds immediately.

She reported that the next round of Northern Border Commission funds for infrastructure were made available in March. Letters of intent and budget need to be in by April 22.

MOTION to use remaining EMDC funds by entering into agreement with the Eastport Area Chamber of Commerce

to market Eastport in a way to coincide with the goals and strategies of the Eastport Economic Development Committee. (Motion Gardner, second Raye). passed 7-0

3. **By laws.** Michael presented a revised setoff bylaws revised from the former EDGE bylaws.

He pointed out that EEDC would consist of 5-9 and that member could be community members, business owners or stakeholders.

MOTION: to accept the bylaws as written with the change of the word "prevent" in the mission statement to "promote". (Motion, Raye, Second Moreno) passed 7-0

4. **Catalyst Buildings:** definition - underutilized buildings that have in the past have been a part of the economic development of the city but are now vacant. After discussion it was decided that our goal for identifying the catalyst buildings and their owners is to be of assistance to owners of the buildings by asking them questions

And analyzing their answers to see

- are there policies or obstacles that the city can change or remove?
- Is the city being prohibitive to your development? Can we ease the burden? If I buy it can I do x,y, z

Potential Catalyst Buildings are:

- Gates Fiber building owned by the PASSAMAQUODDY tribe
- Boat School owned by the Friends of the Boat School

- Cobscook Resource Center, non-profit, Will Hopkins Executive Director
- Wass Building
- Cummings Garage owned by Spinneys
- Former IGA building owned by Marilyn Conti
- 9 Vacant Downtown Storefront/ Living Space buildings, Former Dancing Dog, Former Eastport Pets,

Foster Law, Sutherland's Antiques, Rexall, Passamaquoddy Water, Beckett Building (2 storefronts), and Frontier Bank

Buildings that are now vacant but have a sales plan are, Sea Street, the Chowder House

- Billy felt that we need to ascertain owners' willingness to be listed prior going to City Council for approval. Rayett advocated for doing a face-to-face meeting with owners to get a sense of their willingness to be listed as a Catalyst Building. Kevin Raye will draft a letter explaining our purpose of Catalyst Building designation for absentee owners. Michael Morse will research the owners of the buildings whom we could not name. The list (after owner approval of listing) would be presented to the city council for official Catalyst Building status.
- The city may keep an inventory of information about catalyst buildings for business inquiries.
- Put cities stamp of approval behind a plan for funding.

Laura explained that it would be helpful for the city to have information in one place with contacts needed to start up a business: such as alcohol license, restaurant safety inspections, fire marshal, etc.

5. Joan Lowden has **requested \$ 500 dollars** from the Econ Dev. Comm. to support the 2 Downtown Eastport Artwalks this summer **MOTION:** That

The \$500 to support the Eastport Artwalks. be invoiced from the Eastern Maine Development funds (Motion, Boone, second Moreno) passed 7-0

OPEN forum- Michael attended the 1.5-hour presentation on the Northern Border Commission infrastructure funds mentioned by V. Rusbult.

Kevin and Chris updated Mike on the WCCOG status: waiting to reconstitute and get funds straightened out.

Good words on the work on Northern Maine Economic Development, good staff members and more aligned to our rural county.

Kevin will contact let Mike M. know who to contact at NMEC to let them know we want to meet with them.

NEXT MEETING will be Monday, April 25 at 6 pm.

Motion to adjourn. Passed

Respectfully submitted, Jeanne Peacock ,Secretary Pro-Tem