

**Downtown TIF Advisory Committee
153 Farmington Falls Road
April 27, 2015 4:30 p.m.**

Minutes

TIF Committee members present were Richard Davis, Joshua Bell, Alison Hagerstrom, Byron Davis, Ron Gelinias, John Moore, and Cindy Gelinias. Kevin Madore, Mary Lello, Gary Edwards, Drew Hufnagel, Mike Mansir, Cindi Ferguson, and Tom Saviello were unable to attend.

Mrs. Hagerstrom brought the meeting to order 4:38 p.m.

ITEM 1: To Accept Andrew Hufnagel's Resignation and Elect a New Chairman

Mr. Gelinias made the motion to accept Andrew Hufnagel's resignation.

Mr. Bell seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative 6 – Absent

Motion carried.

Mr. Bell said the Selectmen would be voting on Paul Mills' application to serve on the Committee at their meeting tomorrow night. He moved to take up Items 2 and 3 after Other Business to see if we would have a quorum by then.

ITEM 2: To Approve the Minutes of the March 11, 2015 Meeting

No immediate action.

ITEM 3: To Approve the Minutes of the April 9, 2015 Workshop Meeting

No immediate action.

ITEM 4: To Review the Electrical Outlets Bids

Mr. R. Davis said no firms bid on the project. He said he would call IEC and E & K Electric to get an estimate for the project.

ITEM 5: To Discuss and Make a Recommendation on the Engineering Bids

Mr. B. Davis inquired about the balance on the TIF account.

Mr. R. Davis said there is currently almost \$100,000 in the account, which is enough to

complete the engineering design but not enough to do the Front Street project.

Discussion followed regarding bonding the complete project and dedicating a percentage of the TIF to debt services.

Mr. R. Davis said we would need the preliminary designs for cost estimates so we would know how much to borrow.

Mrs. Hagerstrom suggested having an engineering plan might give the Selectmen incentive to put more money towards the project.

Mr. Bell said it is a 30 year TIF and we should see additional revenue from the new projects that are proposed for this year. He said the Selectmen could vote to have a minimum percentage they would capture for the TIF fund.

Mr. B. Davis said it will be a challenge to get a consensus within the committee, and maybe we need to take a step back and look at projects that would be perpetual and attract more business.

Mr. Gelinias said his understanding is that we don't know how the exact amount will be put into the TIF fund each year, and he asked if the State Revenue Sharing will affect the amount.

Mr. R. Davis said the TIF is dedicated funding within the district, and the only uncertainty is the amount that is dedicated by the Selectmen. He said there was a town meeting to adopt it, and he would check with DECD to make sure the Selectmen can amend the TIF document.

Mr. Moore said we have a dedicated income for a bond. He suggested reviewing the development plan.

Mr. R. Davis said we should be careful not to pick a figure that is too low that would not be enough for the project.

Mr. B. Davis said we have to win over the selectmen with our plan to fund a project. He suggested developing the riverfront and oxbow area such as other towns are doing. Mr. B. Davis said the flow of pedestrian traffic to West Farmington and encouraging business development is a challenge that we have to decide how to deal with at some point.

Mrs. Gelinias said she had thought that the Streetscape Project from Front Street through West Farmington was the plan.

Mr. Moore said there were different projects and ideas during the early meetings. He was concerned that if we dedicate all current and future TIF funds to a large project that may take years to complete, we could "hamstring" our ability to help the next business that comes along.

Mr. Bell said if we are investing in infrastructure we can't go wrong.

Discussion followed regarding infrastructure improvements.

Mrs. Hagerstrom said the selected engineering firm could help the committee reach a consensus of the project areas that have the highest and best use for the TIF funds.

Mr. Bell suggested changing the meeting times to 6:00 p.m. to see if more committee members could attend.

Mr. B. Davis asked if the committee can make a motion without a quorum so they could recommend hiring an engineering firm. He said he is uncertain if this is the best use for the TIF funds.

Discussion followed regarding separating the engineering project areas and bids, how to pay for the Front Street section, and the potential growth areas of the district.

Mr. Moore suggested keeping a certain amount of TIF funds in reserve to use for unanticipated projects and provide more flexibility. He said some of the fund should be used to keep the downtown vibrant. Mr. Moore said Skowhegan has done a lot over the years with CDBG funding. He asked about CDBG funding under the Slum and Blight for West Farmington.

Mrs. Gelinis said she will contact DECD for more information on Slum and Blight.

Mr. R. Davis said Wilton was approved for Slum and Blight, and it would require a town meeting vote to designate West Farmington.

Discussion followed regarding UMF admissions, expansion projects, and what we could do to encourage students to stay here on weekends.

Mr. B. Davis said improving Front Street makes the community more attractive and provides the link to the service area.

Mr. Moore made a motion to email a voting poll to the other members to see if there is a majority in favor of recommending the CES engineering bid.

Mr. Gelinis seconded the motion.

Mr. R. Davis said we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. He said the Selectmen will make the decision on what the Committee recommends. Mr. R. Davis said we can forward to the rest of the members that it was a unanimous decision from the voting members present that this be the recommendation and they can email their votes.

Mr. B. Davis said we have some purchasing power, and if we spend \$50,000 on the engineering we can leverage the TIF funds. He said the bonds will have a dedicated stream of income, and once you know what the project costs, you can do your debt

service and still leave some for other projects.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative 6 – Absent

Motion carried.

ITEM 6: To Discuss Other Business

The Committee decided to have Mrs. Hagerstrom chair the meetings until there is a quorum of members to vote for a new chairman.

Mr. Moore made a motion that Mr. Mills would be in charge of insuring attendance.

Mr. Bell seconded the motion.

Discussion followed regarding the time change, attendance, and membership.

Mr. Bell made a motion to accept the March 11th and April 9th minutes once the corrections have been made.

Mr. B. Davis seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative 6 – Absent

Motion carried.

Mr. B. Davis asked what is happening with the Granary.

Mr. R. Davis said Mr. Dexter is renovating the building and putting in a plumbing business.

Mr. B. Davis asked about the building for sale on Church Street and what is happening with the Church Street Commons.

Discussion followed regarding parking in the downtown, public rest rooms, the building owned by James Murphy's heirs that is for sale on the corner of Church and Cony Streets, and purchasing it for parking to improve future business expansion.

Mr. R. Davis said it was listed at \$110,000 with Harris Real Estate and he would contact the realtor.

Mrs. Hagerstrom said there is also the Franklin Printing TIF and asked if it could be used to help purchase the property.

Mr. R. Davis said he would research the Franklin Printing TIF and if there are any restrictions for its use.

Mrs. Hagerstrom suggested the committee make the recommendation to the Selectmen to purchase the building. She said she would check with the owners of the Church Street Commons building.

Discussion followed regarding the Church Street Commons building and the old Central Maine Power building.

Mr. R. Davis said there are enough TIF funds to purchase the property for parking or engineering, but we can only do one. He said we will have the second year of the TIF funds committed at the end of July or August, which could go towards the engineering project. Mr. R. Davis said any purchase would require a Town Meeting vote.

Discussion followed regarding public rest rooms.

Mr. Gelinas said there is a parking space in back of the old theater building, and someone could talk with the owners of the building about installing a public rest room.

Mr. Bell said he would like more information on the building, costs for demolition, how many parking spaces the lot could accommodate and associated costs.

Mr. Moore said he would contact Acme Engineering to draft a map of the parking spaces.

Mr. R. Davis said he will contact EL Vining for an estimate of the demolition costs. He said he would put it on the Selectmen's agenda for the May 12th meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6th at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinas.