North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee (DDC) Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2020

**In Attendance:** Sheila Orsi, Ethan Melad, Marilynn Borst,
Absent: April Pagnoni, John McClintock
Guests: Sharon Donovan, Dawn Sedlier, Matt Sedlier

**Meeting Opened**: 6:56pm

**Approval of Minutes**: Moved to next meeting as minutes were not available.

Prior to the official start of the meeting, Sharon discussed with the group her enthusiasm for creating usable spaces at the NB School buildings for creative classes and multi-generational/interactive opportunities in this area of the town. We are excited to see what the Cultural Council comes up with. Sharon mentioned starting their first project during the February winter break week.

**Old Business:**1. Sheila welcomed new guests, Sharon, Dawn & Matt to the meeting and gave a quick run-down of our current status. Each were invited to attend the meeting as potential new members.

2. Marilynn gave an update on the FOTH and the Creative Life Center. She would like to see the Historical Commission in NB become reinstated. It was brought up that the CMRPC would like to see a Historical Designation in town, we need to look further into this as there is a difference between National Historic Designations and Local Historic Designations as well as differences between buildings and district areas being designated. Clarification needs to be documented and understood. Sheila is discussing this with Kerrie Salwa to see if the CMRPC has any info on these differences. Marilynn mentioned that the NB Townhouse is already listed as a National Historic Property.

With regard to the Historic Commission, Marilynn would like to speak to Jim Igo (sp?) and Chris Skedley (Sp?) with regards to the possible 81 named historic buildings in town. She also mentioned having a Preservation Planner as well as possibly designating the Main St area a National Historical District.

3. Ethan gave an update on the Pop-Up application he placed for us with the Commonweatlth Places co-sponsored by the Mass. Development Patonicity association. The original application called for several types of events to host on the small town owned park located across the street from the town hall behind the new electronic town sign. Options such as a Beer Garden, Mural Painting Festival and Movie on the Lawn were proposed.

After Ethan finally was able to speak with members of Mass Development and Patronicity in a conference call that was postponed several times, he was informed that the complete application needed to be submitted by January 31, 2020. The extend of video footage, crowd funding and other criteria would make it too difficult to submit a confident application by Jan 31. Some items that need to be fulfilled include, Creating a budget for the events, Creating an online Crowd Funding page as this is a match grant, Creating one type of event to create consistency and efficiency in the marketing (ex several Beer Garden events throughout the summer season), and it was mentioned that this grant helps to support hard costs up to 75% and that 25% of the marketing costs will not be funded by this program.

4. The property located at 197 N. Main St. NB that is located to the right of the townhouse was discussed as to the current sale status. Last mention was that some of the town folks were considering forming an investment group to purchase the property and tie it to the townhouse. The investors made a tour of the property resulting in the understanding that a structural engineer would need to be hired to assess the property as the extend of structural restoration would need to be documented. The investment idea now sounds like it may be up in the air, more information will need to be obtained to see what is happening with this property

5. Sheila obtained minutes and large binders of information from April Pagnoni who officially submitted her letter of resignation through Sheila Orsi. Sheila submitted the information to the NBDDC group and it is with sad hearts that we see April leaving our group. April did mention that she is also disheartened but is available for the DDC to call her on occasion for advice. We will be sure to do that. In the meantime, Sheila is working with other members of the group to place all of minutes and information in electronic format so that it is accessible to the group at all times.

6. Sheila started a Facebook group page for the NBDDC to allow the public and the other committees in town to have accurate and updated information as to the status of on-goings at the NBDDC. Matt mentioned looking into Peabody’s Facebook group called “Moving Peabody Forward” as a format for how to create consistency and lack of overlap of projects.

**New Business**1. Marilynn plans to continue to research information regarding the Historical Commission and Designation items. Sheila will email Kerrie Salwa from the NBDDC to discuss the Townhouse designation and what that may mean for our town.

2. Sheila plans to reach out to Jim Buzzell, FOTH chair, to discuss landscape/streetscape architects/engineers as we want to be on the same page with plans.

3. Ethan is working on Pocket/Vesty Park information to start the process of updating the park area where the Pop-Ups would be happening.

4. Sheila is working on talking with Bonnie Millner about the video status as there is a Contest that the town can put an application into with the Home-Network channel to win a town makeover. We think we are RIPE for winning it – and want to see if we have time to apply!? It is due early February 2020.

5. Sheila needs to discuss updating the NBDDC information that is listed on the town website to make sure it is accurate.

6. As we ended the meeting, Sharon, Dawn and Matt each let the DDC team know that they were interested in joining the team. Sheila is working on making that happen! We are very excited to have you all on board and look forward to the opportunities each of you can help invest into NB’s Downtown area! Thank you for your time and commitment to North Brookfield!

**Next Meeting:** Scheduled for February 3, 2020

**Close of Meeting:** Motion to close meeting made by Sheila Orsi at 8:10 pm, Seconded by Ethan Melad.

Meeting minutes submitted by Sheila Orsi

January 22, 2019