

**Downtown TIF Advisory Committee
153 Farmington Falls Road
May 11, 2016 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

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

Mrs. Hagerstrom called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ITEM 1: To Approve the Minutes of the March 9, 2016 Meeting

Mr. Bell made a motion to approve the March 9, 2016 minutes.

Mr. Madore seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – Affirmative 5 – Absent

Motion carried.

ITEM 2: Field Trip to West Farmington to Look at Possible Parking Options

Mrs. Hagerstrom said we would conduct the meeting out of order beginning with Item 3, and the field trip would be last.

ITEM 3: To Hear an Update on the Ingalls School Community Project

Mr. B. Davis said he has been talking to the broker of Tri County Mental Health Services for a year and has stopped negotiating because their bond holder stated they need \$600,000 or more to acquire the property, and this is not doable. He said he might be able to work a larger deal by including the renovation costs and original assessed value. Mr. B. Davis said the tax credits can be syndicated and sold for approximately \$0.75 on the dollar. He said this type of deal takes time and a motivated seller, and he didn't think they were motivated.

Mr. Bell said he asked Tri County twice if they were going to sell the property and they told him they have no plans to sell building.

ITEM 4: To Hear an Update on the Church Street Parking Lot Project

Mr. Davis said the Town is moving forward with the project, and the current balance in the Downtown TIF reserve account is \$99,581.59 which will increase after the taxes are committed in August. He said Dirigo Engineering has designed the project so it doesn't require a retaining wall at the north end of the property. Surface water will be drained in three different directions and won't involve installing underdrainage. Mr. R. Davis said Cony Street will be reshaped so water will run towards the cemetery, and if erosion problems occur in the cemetery, a catch basin can possibly be installed to tie into the system on Anson Street. He

said this will also improve drainage for Mr. Hawkins garage. Mr. R. Davis said it will probably be another couple of weeks before the design is ready for review and it will be bid as one – demolition and parking lot construction, and maybe in July, with an expected completion before winter.

Mr. Bell asked if lighting is included.

Mr. R. Davis said we don't know yet if lighting will be needed because of the existing light spillover, but we will reserve easements for lighting and fill, and Mr. Marceau has been agreeable to the proposed project design. He said there will be 28 parking spaces, which is the same configuration and number of spaces as the Henderson Memorial Baptist Church lot on Academy Street. The lot will have approximately four feet of green space around it. Mr. R. Davis said this will leave 10 feet available to sell to Mr. Hawkins if he wants it, and he believes this is being a good neighbor. Mr. R. Davis said any sale to the abutters would have to go through a process requiring a Town vote for approval.

Discussion followed regarding the size of the property that might be sold to the abutters, appraisal costs, putting up a fence, and other options.

ITEM 5: To Discuss Future T.I.F. Projects

Mr. R. Davis said Downtown TIF funds can be used to make road improvements within the district.

Mr. Moore asked if the Town has a priority list of roads needing repairs.

Mr. R. Davis said the Town has a five-year road plan that will be updated by the new Public Works Director, Philip Hutchins. He said Front Street was on the list, and he suggested a combination of TIF funds and Public Works project budget to improve the road pavement and construct sidewalks down to Giffords. Mr. R. Davis said we are waiting to hear about the recently submitted DEP Culvert Grant application.

Mr. Bell suggested doing the majority of the Front Street project using tax dollars and use the Downtown TIF funds for lighting to stretch our dollars, and we may have to leverage additional funds.

Mr. R. Davis said this has been a good year from a taxation standpoint and we won't see an increase in the mill rate. He said we could easily spend \$1,000,000 on roads to get caught up because they have been neglected for so long. Mr. R. Davis said we may have a balance in the TIF reserve account of \$50,000 after the Church Street project is completed. He said we have to finish the current road projects, and Anson Street/Titcomb Hill Road is the next two-year project. He said we may have enough funds to do Front Street in three years.

Mr. Moore suggested installing security cameras in the downtown and West Farmington that are transmitted to the Police Department.

Mr. Mills said Deputy Chief Cote presented a proposal to the Downtown Association a year or so ago.

Mr. Moore said Skowhegan installed a security camera system for approximately \$25,000-\$30,000 that business owners could contribute additional funds to link into the system and check on their property. He said the downtown could see an increase in break-ins and property damage with the additional bars, and with the loss of the police foot patrol, these cameras would be a deterrent.

Discussion followed regarding using the Downtown TIF funds to purchase the security system, camera angles and locations, costs, benefits, and graffiti.

Mr. R. Davis said he will get some quotes for the security system.

Mr. Bell suggested addressing the alley unofficially named "Renys Way".

Mr. R. Davis said the agreement was approved and nothing can be done to promote pedestrian use of the alleyway until we can address Reny's liability concerns involving ice and snow falling from their building. He said Mr. Greenwood has been contacted to design a shed roof affixed to the Renys building. Mr. R. Davis said he approximated the cost at \$25,000, but this was just a guess.

Mr. Gelinis asked if there would be room for snow removal.

Mr. R. Davis said, yes.

Mr. Madore asked if Renys will contribute to the design and construction costs.

Mr. R. Davis said, we can ask them.

Mr. Gelinis said this winter he saw they had barricaded and posted private property signs.

Mr. Mills said the Downtown Association distributes a downtown brochure to the tour buses, and it needs to be updated. He asked if the TIF would pay for reprinting the brochure because there are no more available.

Mr. R. Davis said he thought that brochure was paid for using the Franklin Printing TIF, and he said he would put it before the Selectmen.

Mr. Bell asked if the downtown brochure and the town-wide brochure could be combined.

Mrs. Hagerstrom said they each served a different purpose.

Mrs. Hagerstrom, Mr. Gelinis and Mr. R. Davis volunteered to update the brochure.

Mr. B. Davis asked about the rumors of a huge solar project coming to Farmington.

Mr. R. Davis said it hasn't come before the Selectmen, and the Planning Board is currently developing an ordinance.

ITEM 6: To Discuss Other Business

Mrs. Gelinás will compile a list of the projects proposed for the Downtown TIF funds to be included at each meeting.

The meeting then took a brief hiatus.

ITEM 2: Field Trip to West Farmington to Look at Possible Parking Options

Committee members reconvened at the VIS Park in West Farmington. Discussion followed regarding parking options:

- Any additional parking plans for this area would require MDOT approval.
- It was estimated that four to five parallel parking spaces could be designated beside the Park along Bridge Street by removing the sidewalk and rerouting it through the park.
- Possibly three additional parallel parking spaces along the Oakes Street side of the park were thought to be too dangerous due to the volume of truck traffic.
- Property conditions and ownership were discussed.
- VIS Park property lines and the railroad R.O.W. were considered, and Mr. Mills volunteered to look at the deeds.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 13, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinás, Planning Assistant.