

**Downtown TIF Advisory Committee  
153 Farmington Falls Road  
April 25, 2018 6:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

TIF Committee members present were Richard Davis, Byron Davis, Joshua Bell, John Moore, Paul Mills, Derek Hayes, and Cindy Gelinias. Gary Edwards, Ron Gelinias, Cindi Ferguson, and Kevin Madore were unable to attend.

**ITEM 1: To Approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2018 Meeting**

Mr. Bell made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Moore seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – Affirmative  
Motion carried.

**ITEM 2: To Review a Proposed Limited Use License for a Parking lot at 103 Bridge Street**

Mr. R. Davis discussed the information and parking layout detailed in the packet. He stated Code Enforcement Officer, Steve Kaiser had contacted MaineDOT to discuss using their right-of-way at this site for public parking in anticipation of encouraging future business growth in West Farmington. Mr. R. Davis said that Bob and Rachel Nichols currently own the property and are in favor of the project. He said the \$2,500 is a one-time fee for 20 years and may be renewed for another 20 years. Mr. R. Davis said he thought Matt Swan of Tumbledown Brewing was looking to relocate to this site.

Mr. Moore said that is not going to happen because Mr. Swan couldn't purchase the abutting property.

Mr. B. Davis asked if the property was developable being in the flood zone.

Mr. R. Davis said, yes, it is. He said the remnants of the foundation can be grandfathered even though the cellar hole is gone. Mr. R. Davis said the potential parking area is paved but would probably have to be redone.

Mr. Mills stated that it didn't flood during the 1987 flood.

Mr. Moore made a motion to appropriate the \$2,500 to secure the license to bring before the Selectmen for their approval.

Mr. Bell seconded the motion.

Mr. Mills said the contract is being described as a "license" which is revocable and it would be

better if it were a lease or easement. He said it sounds like MaineDOT wants to keep an interest in the property. Mr. Mills asked if we could speak with someone to clarify the language and especially paragraph 11. He said, hypothetically, someone could come in for a business loan that hinged on parking, and with the license expiring in 20 years, this could be a problem.

Mr. R. Davis said he thought there was very little chance that MaineDOT would revoke the license. He said he would ask Mr. Kaiser to contact them regarding clarification and amending the license agreement to a lease or for a longer term. Mr. R. Davis said they want to work with a municipality rather than a private owner.

Mr. Moore asked if we could purchase the right-of-way.

Mr. R. Davis said they weren't interested in selling.

Mr. Moore stated he would amend his motion subject to Mr. Underkuffler putting in language to protect the Town regarding Paragraph 11.

Mr. Bell seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative  
Motion carried.

**ITEM 3: To Consider Recommending the use of Downtown T.I.F. funds for Sidewalks and Lighting on Front Street**

Mr. R. Davis said we are looking at a substantial project on Front Street that we have talked about before. He said the box culvert on lower Front Street is being replaced at a cost in excess of \$200,000, and the Town received a DEP grant of \$75,000 that will go towards the project. Mr. R. Davis said the sidewalk will begin across from the UMF parking lot down to Gifford's, and we will stub-out for decorative lighting. He said the additional part of the project is to extend the sidewalk from the Western Mountain Financial building down to the Farmers Union, which will require a retaining wall of 6-8 feet high, and then the sidewalk will cross the street continuing on down to the UMF parking lot. Mr. R. Davis said we will be asking Summit Engineering to do some test borings at the toe of the slope to study soil stability for constructing a block retaining wall like the one on the corner of Front and Broadway. He stated the Town would need permission from the two abutting property owners to conduct the study.

Mr. Moore said he granted permission for his property but the other one is owned by Jennifer Bjorn.

Mr. R. Davis said the estimated cost for the retaining wall is \$65,000 and it is a fairly long stretch with varying height to follow the terrain. He said Dirigo Engineering proposes to move the street over two feet towards the Just Ask Rental buildings to keep the height down, and they have assured that this won't cause travel problems. Mr. R. Davis said some Public Works money will be put into this project. He said if there isn't another use planned for the

appropriation of the Downtown TIF money, provided the Selectmen approve the same amount as last year, we could recommend to the Selectmen that \$100,000 of the TIF money be put towards this project for sidewalks and lighting.

Mr. Moore asked if the sidewalk could be installed in front of Just Ask Rental with curb cuts and eliminate the need for the retaining wall.

Mr. R. Davis said the Farmers Union doesn't want to close off the open spaces with islands and so the crosswalk will be striped. He said there are problems in front of the grow shop where the Town right-of-way ends three feet from the buildings. Mr. R. Davis said the Town will need to acquire an easement to pave and change the parking to parallel to allow enough room for the painted sidewalk in front of the buildings.

Mr. B. Davis said the Committee planned to do this project when it was first formed, but at that time it was financially out of reach. He said this will look fantastic and tie in with the improvements that Mr. Moore has been making to the area.

Mr. R. Davis said the big holdup was getting FairPoint to move their cables that run through the culvert, and the project will include raising the road grade two feet so that it won't flood as often.

Mr. Mills asked how much of our annual set aside that would be.

Mr. R. Davis said we currently have approximately \$35,000, and if the Selectmen appropriate \$125,000 as they did last year, we will have approximately \$160,000 available. He said we could partially fund the security cameras but that project is in limbo. Mr. R. Davis said the engineer spoke with Farmers Union Manager, Larry Donald and his only concern was the current location of the catch basin in front of their warehouse.

Mr. Moore stated further commercial expansion on this street is limited, and he questioned if the cost to improve the street would relate to measurable economic growth for the town which is why the Downtown TIF was created. He said it would be worth having a conversation with the Farmers Union Board regarding the location of the sidewalk to eliminate the cost of constructing the retaining wall.

Discussion followed regarding sidewalk locations, Just Ask Rental and the Farmers Union entrances, and pedestrian safety.

Mr. R. Davis said he is asking for direction from the Committee if they agree to use some of the TIF funds towards sidewalk and lighting improvements. He said it would be ideal to have the sidewalk stay on the same side, but we can't, and this is a good plan that is safe. Mr. R. Davis stated we are getting ready to go out to bid and it would be more economical to bid everything at once.

Mr. Moore said he supports some funds being used for decorative lighting and sidewalks but the Town should be picking up the tab for the big infrastructure projects.

Mr. Mills asked about paving the "99 Year Lease" parking lot expansion and the security

camera project.

Mr. R. Davis said paving the parking lot would cost approximately \$3,000. He said Deputy Chief Shane Cote emailed him that the other security company he contacted hadn't provided a quote, and he suggested considering the nest cameras and attaching them to the property/business owner's buildings.

Mr. Hayes asked what the total cost of the Front Street Project would be.

Mr. R. Davis said we won't know the total cost until we received the bids, but the culvert is in excess of \$200,000 and \$65,000 for the retaining wall.

Mr. Mills said the Downtown TIF funds are used to do projects that the Town couldn't otherwise afford. He said some funds could be dedicated to lights and sidewalks but not the retaining wall. Mr. Mills asked if it is worth it to use the funds in a peripheral area.

Mr. R. Davis said when the committee was formed and considering projects, it was thought that installing sidewalks and decorative lighting on Front Street and continuing along Main Street would be a part of connecting the downtown with West Farmington.

Mr. B. Davis said the Notify MD building has potential for expansion, and Front Street and High Street are being used as a bypass to the north. Mr. B. Davis said we would have \$60,000 remaining for the security camera project, and he asked if there was a consensus from the Committee on contributing to the Front Street project.

Mr. Bell said Front Street has experienced the most development.

Mr. Moore said stubs for future lights should be included.

Mr. Mills made a motion to recommend allocating up to \$100,000 for such portion of the sidewalks and lights but not the retaining wall.

Mr. Bell asked about the lighting and how many.

Mr. R. Davis said the lights would be the same as in the downtown with approximately 30 that are spaced 80 feet apart. He said the plan includes two lights on the retaining wall that would be shielded.

Mr. Hayes seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 Affirmative  
Motion carried.

Mr. B. Davis said it's very dangerous crossing Front Street around the Farmers Union area.

Mr. R. Davis said there will be two raised crosswalks - one to the UMF parking lot and the other after the retaining wall by the Farmers Union which should slow the traffic.

**ITEM 4: To Review the Status of the Security Camera Project**

Mr. B. Davis stated, as discussed earlier, we are waiting for more information on this project.

**ITEM 5: To Discuss Other Business**

Mr. Bell said we discussed sending a memo to the members that haven't been attending asking if they want to continue on the Committee and give them a time-frame to respond.

Mr. R. Davis said he would send out the memo. He welcomed the newest member, Derek Hayes, who has taken the place of Mike Mansir.

Discussion followed regarding asking other people to become members.

Mr. Bell asked about paving the "99 Year Lease" lot.

Mr. R. Davis said Mr. Moore has prepped the new area and we can pave it when we are paving Front Street.

Mrs. Gelinis said she will send out a Doodle Poll for the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinis.