

**Downtown TIF Advisory Committee
153 Farmington Falls Road
July 17, 2018 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

TIF Committee members present were Richard Davis, Byron Davis, Joshua Bell, John Moore, Ron Gelinias, Paul Mills, Derek Hayes, and Cindy Gelinias. Deputy Chief Shane Cote, Jennifer Bjorn, and Rachel Ohm from the Central Maine Newspaper. Cindi Ferguson was unable to attend.

ITEM 1: To Approve the Minutes of the April 25, 2018 Meeting

Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2018 meeting.

Mr. B. Davis seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

ITEM 2: To Review the Status of the Downtown Security Camera Project (Deputy Chief Shane Cote)

Deputy Chief Cote reviewed the information in his email that stated the cost estimates from Seacoast Securities and Norris Security were too high. He said the Nest cameras require wireless internet and power connections and cost \$350 each with three pricing options for video storage per camera, and he recommended the 30 day storage for \$250 per year or a minimum ten day storage for \$50 per year. Deputy Chief Cote said the cost for ten cameras would be \$3,500 and \$500 for 10 day video storage, or \$2,500 for 30 day video storage per year. He said we would need to work with the downtown businesses and building owners to obtain places to mount the cameras and connect to their power and internet, and these members would be allowed to access certain cameras.

Mr. Gelinias asked about the quality of the cameras and if they were color and high resolution.

Deputy Chief Cote said they are and his department has an indoor camera that has been installed outside since they moved in. He showed everyone the live feed on his phone. Deputy Chief Cote said he would get a price for installation through F.W. Webb.

Mr. B. Davis asked where they would be placed.

Deputy Chief Cote said it would depend on the angles and which businesses and building owners would give permission.

Ms. Bjorn said she would allow them on her building, and she asked if additional cameras could be added by businesses and who could then pay the difference.

Mr. R. Davis said we could treat any additional fees for cameras and storage as a revenue account.

Mr. Moore stated we should target areas that have had problems with vandalism, etc.

Deputy Chief Cote stated we can expand up to 36 cameras. He said he has the map of the downtown with proposed camera locations that was proposed when he and Ms. Mauri from UMF worked on the project.

Mr. B. Davis asked about any cameras on the UMF campus and their coverage area.

Deputy Chief Cote said UMF isn't moving forward with the project at this point. He said we could have cameras on town property aimed at the campus. Deputy Chief Cote suggested installing ours before we ask UMF if they want to be included in adding cameras on or near the campus and asking them if we could use their internet.

Mr. Moore asked if we could cover Meetinghouse Park and add internet to that area.

Mr. R. Davis said that would be a good benefit for people visiting the town, and if we considered the gazebo a town building, it may work out. He said he would speak with George Allen at Beeline Cable.

Deputy Chief Cote said if the Franklin County Courthouse would allow us to use their internet we could buy extenders to cover the Meetinghouse Park which are inexpensive compared to installing a router.

Mr. B. Davis asked if the committee had a recommendation.

Mr. Gelinis asked if we had enough money to cover this project.

Mr. R. Davis said we currently have \$49,473 in the reserve account. We began last year with approximately \$35,000 in the account, and the amount appropriated was \$125,000. The West Farmington project cost \$111,000, so \$14,000 was added to the account. If the Selectmen appropriate the same amount as last year at \$125,000, we would have nearly \$175,000, \$122,000 of which is earmarked for Front Street. That would leave about \$53,000 available for other projects.

Mr. Hayes asked how the Downtown TIF account is funded.

Mr. R. Davis said it is a 15 year TIF, that the Selectmen appropriate the funds every year, and after that time, we would have to find another source of revenue to keep it going. He said we may have to build it into the Town budget.

Mr. Bell said if this is approved, it could be funded under public safety or the police budget.

Mr. R. Davis said the TIF is set up for "brick and mortar" projects and not yearly operations.

Mr. Moore said the police conducted "foot patrol" years ago which was a valuable source of security and now virtual coverage is the way to go.

Mr. Gelinas made a motion to allow Deputy Chief Cote to pursue the Nest camera proposal.

Mr. Mills seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

Mr. R. Davis said we will nail down the costs and then bring it before the Selectmen for their approval.

Deputy Chief Cote said he will get cost for installation and cameras and then attend the next Farmington Downtown Association (FDA) to find out which businesses would allow the use of their internet and install cameras. He suggested including Hippach Field and check to see if there is internet available.

Mr. Mills said the next FDA meeting should be August 8th.

ITEM 3: To Review the Status of the Front Street Retaining Wall and Culvert Project

Mr. R. Davis said the Selectmen awarded the bid to Ranger Contracting from Winslow at \$421,402, and the other bidders were El Vining at \$441,607 and Jordan Excavation at \$448,865. He said the cost for just the sidewalks and lighting totaled \$122,824 and in order to meet the budget he asked the Selectmen to appropriate an additional \$22,000 from the TIF account and they agreed. He said the bids came in higher than expected, and he did this in order to secure the funds for the project because the timing did not allow to come back to this committee for their approval. Mr. R. Davis said this gives us the bases for the lighting but not the lights themselves, which will be done in a separate bid next year.

Mr. R. Davis said this phase of the sidewalk project will end at the back corner of Gifford's parking lot, and with raised sidewalks at the corner of Main Street for continuity that shouldn't affect their parking. He said the second phase of the sidewalk will include paving, striping and some railing in front of the old Front Street Tavern which he estimated will cost approximately \$100,000 and enable us to do additional decorative lighting.

Mr. Mills asked about the appropriation of the additional \$22,000, and he suggested that in the future an email should be circulated regarding any changes to recommendations made by the committee.

Mr. Moore said at the last meeting it was agreed the TIF money was paying for the decorative aspects of the project but now it's costing more than the agreed amount with no lighting. He asked who is going to pay for decorative lighting.

Mr. R. Davis said this is a two year project and this year it covered granite curbing, sidewalks, crosswalks, and ten light pole bases and conduits. He said next year the lights will be paid for out of the TIF account. Mr. Davis said the poles cost approximately \$2,000 - \$3,000 each plus the light fixtures, and the plan includes additional lighting.

Mr. B. Davis said this is the first phase and the final touches will be added next year.

Discussion followed regarding installing fixtures for banners and plants on the poles.

Mr. Moore said he felt the TIF fund was getting double dipped on this project. He stated we should be asking for more of the arbitrary money that is being captured because we don't have a "war chest" for when a project comes up. Mr. Moore said the TIF funds were designed for "icing on the cake" and not for infrastructure projects. He stated he has a lot of property on this road and didn't see the value in drawing down two years of TIF funds for this project.

Mr. R. Davis said the other alternative would be to use tax dollars to install the lights.

Mr. Bell said if the Selectmen voted to add \$125,000 to the TIF account, there would be enough to fund the camera project. He said when the Front Street project was originally designed the cost was estimated at \$500,000.

Ms. Bjorn asked if the committee can present a request for more than the \$125,000, and must all the funds be spent within a year.

Mr. R. Davis said, yes you can request more, and it can remain in reserve for a project.

Mr. Hayes asked if we had a project "wish list".

Mr. B. Davis said this project has been on the list since this committee began.

Mr. Moore said other projects included the bridge across the Sandy River, public bathrooms downtown, and additional parking. He said we should consider adding to the TIF funds in case economic times make it tougher to keep the downtown vibrant.

Mr. Bell said this project will make Front Street more appealing to visitors by adding an element of architectural design, and the TIF allows the Town to spend money on projects it wouldn't be able to consider.

Discussion followed regarding the prior meeting minutes, payment for the Front Street project, earmarking TIF funds for future projects, and the status of the former MBNA building.

ITEM 4: To Discuss Maine DOT's Position regarding a Proposed Limited Use License for a Parking lot at 103 Bridge Street

Mr. R. Davis reviewed the email from Maine DOT in response to our request amending the proposed license agreement, which was \$2,500 for 20 years and could be renewed for an additional 20 years and would only be offered to a municipality, to a lease or longer term. He said they wouldn't extend the term to 50 years and would do everything to not break the agreement because they may need to use it to when making repairs.

Mr. Bell asked if it is because of the life expectancy of the bridge.

Mr. R. Davis said the life expectancy is 75 years.

Mr. Mills said it was built in 1991.

Mr. R. Davis suggested not doing anything immediately because there currently isn't a business developing the site.

Mr. Bell said the more he looked at it he didn't think it was something we should jump on.

Discussion followed regarding the proposal. Mr. Bell asked if the property owners would be willing to reimburse the Town for the cost of the license.

Mr. R. Davis said he would contact Rachel Nichols to see if they were interested in purchasing the license.

ITEM 5: To Discuss the Recruitment of new Committee Members

Mr. B. Davis made a motion to elect Ms. Bjorn to the committee.

Mr. Mills seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

Mr. Hayes asked what qualifications were required to be on the committee.

Mr. R. Davis said they don't have to be a resident, just have a significant interest in the downtown.

Mr. B. Davis said UMF isn't represented and he suggested asking Jeff McKay or Cindy McShane to become members.

Mr. Gelinas said he would ask Origin BJJ, LLC owner, Peter Roberts.

ITEM 6: To Discuss Other Business

Mr. B. Davis said we have a lot of properties in the downtown who have or share dumpsters and he asked what we more we could do to recycle.

Discussion followed regarding recycling bins on the street and drive-up roll-offs for recycling.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinas.