

**Downtown TIF Advisory Committee
153 Farmington Falls Road
March 9, 2016 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

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

Mrs. Hagerstrom called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

ITEM 1: To Approve the Minutes of the January 14, 2016 Meeting

The minutes were placed on file.

ITEM 2: To Hear an Update on the Ingalls School Community Project

Mr. B. Davis said the project is moving forward very slowly, and he has offered to pay the total purchase price of \$435,000 at closing. He said he would need a credit enhancement agreement from the Town to make purchase price part of the cash flow to support the project and help pay down the debt. Mr. B. Davis stated the rest of the elements were all in place, and the University Credit Union is exercising their option to purchase the abutting property.

ITEM 3: To Review the Town Meeting Article Amending the Downtown T.I.F. District Boundaries

Mr. R. Davis gave an overview of the three page warrant article, and he stated, the Town Meeting will serve as the Public Hearing. He said the Ingalls School and the American Legion will be added to the Downtown TIF district, and the acreage of the roads within the district will be included in case the Town has to do improvements.

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

Mr. R. Davis said the Selectmen awarded the bid of \$8,200 for asbestos abatement to State Wide Asbestos Removal from Plymouth. He said he will be sending out request for proposals for demolition of the building and engineering for the parking lot design and drainage soon. Mr. R. Davis said we should be able to get the building down and leveled this year, and depending on budget funds and how late in the year everything is completed, we may be able to finish it this year.

Mrs. Hagerstrom said there is a business interested in moving into the Church Street

Commons building and the parking lot is integral to their decision.

Mr. Bell asked if there was any leverage money to put towards finishing the parking lot.

Mr. R. Davis said once the taxes are committed in August we will know the amount of TIF funds available, and we may be able to start spending after that.

ITEM 5: To Review the Town Meeting Article Establishing “Reny’s Way” as a Public Easement to Improve access to the Church Street Parking Lot

Mr. R. Davis said the warrant article establishes a pedestrian easement for the alleyway. He said the abutters have agreed to the easement but the insurance company for Renys is a little uncomfortable with the liability issue. Mr. R. Davis said if the alley is private then Renys has a potential liability for pedestrian accidents whereas the Town is immune from “slip and fall” injuries. He stated the Town Attorney, Frank Underkuffler, has offered a side letter to the agreement stating that the Town wouldn’t promote using the ally until the Downtown TIF funds would become available to construct a roof next to the Renys building to protect pedestrians.

Mr. B. Davis said the parking lot will increase pedestrian traffic in the alley.

Mr. Mills said it could be a seasonal throughway. He said many cities install multilingual warning signs using illustrations instead of words.

Mr. Bell suggested negotiating with Renys to contribute to the cost of constructing the shed roof.

Discussion followed regarding the hazards of falling ice and snow off of various locations in the downtown, and sidewalk conditions.

ITEM 6: To Discuss Future T.I.F. Projects

Mrs. Hagerstrom suggested purchasing the “Thought Bridge” in West Farmington.

Mr. R. Davis said it is in the TIF district and the taxes and utilities are currently paid in full.

Mr. Bell said the property has some economic potential for a business.

Mr. B. Davis asked if the Town could condemn it as a dangerous building.

Mr. R. Davis said we have been trying to find someone with the authority to speak with to secure the building.

Discussion followed regarding other dilapidated buildings in the town and what can be done about them.

Mr. R. Davis suggested the Reny's shed roof for a TIF project. He said we are no longer eligible for CDBG grants to leverage more funds for infrastructure improvements like the Front Street and West Farmington projects.

Mrs. Hagerstrom said the deadline to submit applications for the Northern Border Regional Commission funds is in April and she would email the link to their website. She suggested these funds could be used for economic development and the Front Street sidewalks and road projects.

Mr. Bell said he would like to know what it would cost for the Front Street project. He said while we are installing the culvert maybe we could use some TIF and Local Roads funds to construct the sidewalks and improve the road. Mr. Bell said the Committee shouldn't ignore improving parking near the post office in West Farmington which would help the downtown grow.

Mr. R. Davis said MDOT will be involved and that traffic engineering needs to be done.

Discussion followed regarding master plan changes to the UMF campus.

ITEM 7: To Discuss Other Business

The Committee agreed to conduct a site walk-over in West Farmington at the next meeting.

Discussion followed regarding committee member attendance, inviting other interested people to become members, and promoting the Revolving Loan Fund 0% interest for façade improvements in West Farmington.

The next meeting was set for May 11, 2016.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinis, Planning Assistant.