

# Groton Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes 5/24/16

## **Attendees:**

Economic Development Committee :Russell Burke, Mike Rasmussen, John Konetzny, Art Prest, Jason Parent, and Anna Eliot

Public: Bruce Easom, Greg Sheldon, Val Prest, Becky Pine

## **Minutes:**

The meeting was called to order by Mike Rasmussen at 5:30 PM at Legion Hall.

1. The Committee welcomed members of the Municipal Building Committee for the Prescott School to the Meeting. Greg Sheldon provided an overview of the MBCPS effort and the report issued for the re use of the Prescott School and also were present to answer any questions and address any issue from the EDC. Mr. Sheldon stated the report proposed the building use be 40% Business, 40 % Administrative, and 20% Community Activities. The building contains approximately 27,000 sf of gross floor area and 19,000 sf of rentable area.

Becky Pine stated the report was a blueprint and the specifics will be the responsibility of the new committee formed to prepare an RFP for an interested party to manage the implementation. She also noted there are many uncertainties to be resolved such as the School Department continued tenancy and the Senior Center feasibility study that may have bearing on the future reuse,.

Mike Rasmussen praised the MBCPS for the hard work they did and the report they prepared. He pointed out the EDC has a charge to foster economic development and promote business enterprise in Groton. He noted the interest expressed by Evans on the Common which represents an ideal business. Mr. Sheldon indicated the MBCPS does include room for retail in addition to office and community uses and that Evans might fit into a future reuse.

Art Prest mentioned that the municipal budget is stressed and has created a heightened interest in generating additional tax revenue from economic development and questioned the reliance on CPA funding and the revenue generating potential. Mr. Sheldon indicated the plan includes private fundraising and other grants in addition to rents.

Russ Burke complimented the MBPCS on the work they did. He also stated the reuse of the Prescott School should be viewed in the context of how it fits in the overall Groton Center planning. He noted the importance of municipal parking at Prescott School and praised the report for including this. He stated that retail uses are difficult attract and Evans on the Common is a perfect fit for Groton Center.

Jason Parent mentioned he was on the original Prescott School Re use Committee and found many of the current issues were the same issues discussed several years ago. He expressed a need for a clear vision for the property.

Anna Eliot expressed the need for economically viable use for the building and a long term lease. Mr. Sheldon noted the new committee will assume that responsibility.

John Konetzny question whether a single tenant for the property may provide greater financial security than multiple smaller tenants,

Val Prest commented the building needs a great amount of work and that the top floor has a floor load of only 50 lbs per sf which would support office but not retail or storage. He stated the building would need to meet seismic code and the total cost would exceed 5 million dollars.

On a motion made by Burke seconded by Parent the EDC voted unanimously to work to work with the new Committee on the re use of the Prescott School

2. The Committee discussed the replacement for Greg Troughton who recently tendered his resignation. Anna Eliot mentioned she received an email today form Selectmen Chair jack Petropoulos stating he was not supporting her re appointment to the EDC. Mike Rasmussen stated he also received the same email.
3. The Committee reviewed the press release prepared by Art Prest on the recently adopted Permitting Guide. On a motion by Burke, seconded by Parent the Board voted to issue the press release
4. The next meeting will be at 6:00 PM on June 6, 2016 concurrent with the Board of Selectmen meeting.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Russell J. Burke