

Members Present: Wayne R. Walker, Heather M. Billings, James A. DeLisle

Others Present: Karen Murphy, Stephanie Lahtinen, Steve Wallace, Keith Harding, Doneen Durling

CALL TO ORDER

W. Walker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in room 205 of the Town Hall. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Access TV, and the Gardner News.

APPROVALS

WARRANTS

H. Billings made a motion to approve the following warrant.

September 15, 2016	Accounts Payable 17-11A	\$127,016.93
September 22, 2016	Accounts Payable 17-12A	\$1,107,517.41
September 22, 2016	Payroll 17-12B	\$198,326.01
September 21, 2016	Deduction 17-12C	\$174,651.42

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

J. DeLisle made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 12, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATION – DPW MAINTENANCE MECHANIC

H. Billings made a motion to hire James Grenier as a Maintenance Mechanic, replacing a recently retired employee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATION – HIGHWAY TRUCK DRIVER/LABORER

H. Billings made a motion to hire Theodore Howe as Highway Truck Driver and Laborer, filling a vacancy. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

HEARINGS/OTHER SCHEDULED MATTERS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Steve Wallace discussed the Master Plan Implementation schedule for the Economic Development Committee according to following criteria outlined in the Master Plan:

- *Training and Materials for New Board/Committee/Commission Members:* The Economic Development Committee does not have any formal role that is described in State law, thus the State does not offer any training programs for local economic development officials. The EDC also is not a quasi-judicial board that issues permits or issues decisions. The role of the EDC is advisory only. EDC members and staff have attended several regional and state conferences on economic development during the four years of its existence and will continue to seek out training opportunities as they present themselves.
- *Secure Funding for Economic Development Initiatives:* The EDC has secured a modest operating budget for the past three years. The EDC seeks grant opportunities to fund its initiatives, such as the tourism grant from the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association that funded our popular town map/brochure, and the upcoming Economic Development Self-Assessment project that is being funded by the Governor's Community Compact program.
- *Acquire Professional Assistance for Economic Development Initiatives:* the EDC has secured a modest operating budget for the past three years. The EDC seeks grant opportunities to

fund its initiatives, such as the tourism grant from the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association that funded our popular town map/brochure, and the upcoming Economic Development Self-Assessment project that is being funded by the Governor's Community Compact program.

- *Develop a Computerized Database of Available Commercial and Industrial Properties:* completed list is available on EDC webpage
- *Initiate New Business Recruitment Efforts:* The EDC is currently working on a business solicitation effort that should be completed by the end of the calendar year. It does not make sense to move forward on this effort until the Town's in-line sewer storage system is operational and can accommodate the wastewater disposal needs of new businesses and industries.
- *Coordinate Development Activity with owners of Industrial Land:* The EDC tries to do this on an ongoing basis and the spring tour of our industrial sites with the State's economic development staff is an example of this. In addition, the Town Planner is in constant contact with the owners of the Westminster Business Park to further the completion of this project.
- *Have Town Serve as Liaison between Businesses and Economic Development Agencies:* the Town Planner attends all regional ED meetings sponsored by the North-Central MA Chamber of Commerce and keeps in contact with the State's ED entities. The EDC tries to invite a special guest to each of its meetings, usually one or our state or regional ED partners.
- *Prepare and Distribute a Promotional Brochure:* This project was completed two years ago through a generous grant from the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association. By all accounts, our promotional brochure has been a big hit.
- *Install Historic Wayfaring Signage:* The EDC has yet to initiate this project, but it has been a topic of discussion at many EDC meetings. As you know, the Planning Board is in the middle of a three-phase effort to overhaul the Town's zoning bylaw, and is currently working on the second phase. The third phase will be initiated in the second half of 2017 and will include a rewrite of the Town's sign bylaw. The EDC would like to wait until the sign bylaw is revised so that any new wayfaring signage is fully compliant with the new bylaw. There are several grants out there that could help the Town fund a wayfaring signage project.
- *Participate in a Regional Tour of Historic Villages:* This idea has not come to fruition yet, but the EDC stands ready to participate if and when it happens.
- *Sponsor an Annual Festival:* This idea was discussed at many of the early EDC Meetings. The idea was eventually transferred to a group of dedicated volunteers who planned and implemented the very successful inauguration of the first annual Westminster Cracker Festival last fall. Plans are underway for the 2nd iteration of the festival this coming fall.
- *Investigate the Federal Brownfields Program:* The Town utilized MRPC's Brownfields program to conduct a Phase I Environmental Assessment of the Old Town Hall. The EDC now has some familiarity with this program and will keep it in mind for other properties that may have contamination issues.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.