

Pownal Economic Development and Sustainability Committee

~ Agenda – March 2, 2023 ~

6:30 p.m.

1. Review Minutes of February 2, 2023
2. Review of Select Board's comments on warrant article request
3. Review/complete draft of RFP
4. Other

Pownal Economic Sustainability and Development Committee
February 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Call to Order – 6:30 pm

Present –Susan Briggs Peters, Chairperson, Andy O’Brien – Select Board Liaison, Paul Schumann, John Libby, Patricia Hodgdon.

Guest: Matthew Panfil – Planning Director for Greater Portland Council of Governments. Matt was here to answer questions surrounding the committee’s task to develop a plan for the village district and creation of an RFP to hire a professional consultant.

- Matt feels completion of the study and receipt of deliverables will probably take a year, give or take. Planning consultants are very busy. Recommended - put a desired completion date in the RFP.
- Susan asked what the consultant need from us. Matt suggests that it would be helpful to include a paragraph as to what we are trying to accomplish.
- Susan asked if Matt has any idea of what this study will costs. Matt suggests that the cost can be under \$25,000 depending on what we want for deliverables, how much detail.
- Paul wants the study to give us the information we need to approach and convince the townspeople. Matt suggests having two meetings with the public and the consultant.
- Matt suggests specifying the scale of what we want and possibly asking for different levels of concept plans.
- John asked Matt for recommendations on consultants. Matt cannot recommend but feels the GPCG can help with some part of the RFP. A discussion ensued of legalities and ethics with working with the GPCG on the RFP. Tonight’s meeting is within the scope of our benefit as a member of GPCG.
- Architectural design can be part of a concept plan, but Matt recommends not getting too specific. Guidelines should be offered rather than standards used.
- The study should provide a concept plan with recommendations on how to obtain the vision set forth, such as changes to zoning, etc.
- Paul asks if Pownal even has enough population to support a built-up village district. Volume of traffic in the town center is an asset.
- Matt suggests that the plan should help identify strategies for easing the tax burden on residents.
- Paul asks if it would be reasonable to ask the consultant to comment on the importance of infrastructure.
- Andy asks when we get into the development phase (which is a long way off), can the GPCG help with implementing programs such a TIF. Our membership with GPCG offers opportunity to get advice on governmental programs offering funding and ways to get things done.
- Our next step is to create or further develop the draft RFP. Legal counsel should review what we come up with. Matt recommends looking at some others on the internet. Matt offered to take a look at anything we come up with.

Susan began a discussion on how to avoid our study being held up from lack of funds. Becky has asked for our budget for our committee.

Susan asked the committee which format we want to use for the RFP. The consensus was to use that sent to us recently by Susan. She also asked for each committee member to submit to her our draft by Feb 22nd. March 2nd will be the next committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Hodgdon, Secretary

DRAFT

Approved 02.08.2023

**Pownal Economic Sustainability and Development Committee
January 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting began with no formal call to order at 6:35 pm.

Present –Andy O’Brien – Select Board Liaison, Paul Schumann, John Libby, Patricia Hodgdon – Secretary.

Absent – Susan Briggs Peters

Stephen Cole – Regional Planner with Maine DOT joined us. Key points of the discussion with Stephen are:

- Steve asked what our committee is all about and Andy explained how we formed. John elaborated on ideas for expansion of the Village district. Paul explained about the goal of incentivizing business and the lack of business in the Village District. He also explained the challenges facing the committee.
- Steve says we already have building blocks of a village with the church, municipal buildings, crossroads store, school and cemetery. The town/committee needs to find ways to build on the assets we have to incentivize business, that being the missing piece from our village.
- Maine DOT can help with sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. Towns reach out to Maine DOT when they are further along with village development and encounter a problem.
- Steve suggests that we find private development for business development. To do this we need to tinker with the zoning ordinances for the village based on what type of business we desire. He envisions small box stores such as Dollar General being a good fit. Small scale development often occurs without infrastructure such as municipal water.
- Maine DOT infrastructure program is not a program for us at this point but there are several other state programs. That program is more for a town further along with their village development and need help with components such as lighting, sidewalks, etc. 60 % of such projects are paid by Maine DOT.
- TIF is a designation that a municipality makes that targets an area for growth and a portion of the tax revenue is sheltered from tax increases. Lots of municipalities use TIF.
- Focus on land use planning. Steve said this is where he would start. Modification of lot sizes is important to encourage small businesses.
- Steve suggested reaching out to Greater Portland Council of Government- Matt Panfil, Planning Director. Andy has a contact with this organization and will start the process.
- Discussion ensued on what specifically we want professional help to accomplish since this committee now has funding at its disposal.

Adjourned at 7:50

Respectfully submitted by Pat Hodgdon, Secretary

Approved 02.08.2023

**Pownal Economic Sustainability and Development Committee
December 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Call to order by Susan Peters – 6:30

Present – Susan Peters Chair, Andy O’Brien – Select Board Liaison, Heidi Curry-Selectboard, Paul Schumann, John Libby, Patricia Hodgdon – Secretary.

First item of business was to approve the minutes from 11/3/2022. Paul made a motion to approve these minutes. John seconds, and all are in favor of acceptance.

The Committee had a discussion of the recent Selectboard meeting on November 14th with Maine Municipal Association (MMA) regarding changing our form of town government. MMA reps mentioned using an ordinance instead of a town charter to allow a town manager form. A town charter is preferable but will take lots of work and years to develop. Paul prompted much discussion as to whether a town manager would solve the planning problems the town faces. Heidi stated that town management is becoming more challenging and we need to start soon on a resolution. A charter would allow more flexibility with town management making it easier to make changes other than at the annual town meeting. A charter commission would be needed. Discussion touched on how to get buy-in from the townspeople. Paul suggests that the best way to educate the people on the need for a charter commission is to present them with a “state of the union” prior to the Town Meeting.

There was a brief discussion on the value of getting someone from Maine DOT to come to our next meeting. Susan was to ask Becky if she could arrange this.

Andy suggests it would be wise for the committee to consult with some professionals on how to go about developing a plan, for instance- a growth study.

Paul suggests we ask the select board to use the \$25,000 appropriated at the last town meeting for a growth study and guidance on how to accomplish our task. Susan asked Paul to write up a request to the select board, but Paul thinks it might be best to wait until after Maine DOT visit. Spending this sum of money on professional help will require abiding by town policy for bids. Who to hire?

The committee studied a map of the town regarding the village district area. Susan brings up the issue of public water. How close are we to public water of neighboring towns? Paul believes that public water or knowing what the ground water supply is would be valuable incentive to possible investors. Input from experts, possibly the state geologist, might be helpful. The committee should decide what the village should look like, what area it should encompass, and then go to the selectboard to request professional help.

Approved 02.08.2023

Susan asks what we should discuss if the Maine DOT does not attend our January meeting. John recommends defining the village district. Andy will see if he can get information from the state geologist for information on the water issue. Paul wants to brainstorm the vision of the village.

Adjourned at 7:50 pm with the talk of new babies!

Respectfully submitted by Pat Hodgdon, Secretary.