

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.

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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.