



CITY OF BIDDEFORD

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes June 14, 2022 – Regular Meeting 6:00pm, City Council Chambers

PRESENT: Susan Swanton, Camille White, Renee Messier, Victoria Foley, Anne Nadzo, Robert Cyr (via Zoom), Patrick Mourmouras, Ari Brandstein

ABSENT: William Emhiser

CITY STAFF: Brad Favreau

1. Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 5:30pm

2. Approval of Minutes

The commission had just received the minutes the day of the meeting and no members of the commission felt prepared to approve minutes.

- Victoria Foley proposed a motion to table approval of the minutes to next meeting
- Susan Swanton seconded the motion
- The motion was unanimously approved

3. Old Business

3.1 Public Art policy discussion

Anne Nadzo informed the commission, the Public Art Policy will be presented to the City Council during the July 5th meeting. Brad Favreau explained originally the plan was to present to the City Council's Policy Committee first. During a discussion with City Manager Jim Bennett, Mr. Bennett recommended the policy should first be approved by the Council.

Mr. Bennett also recommended the commission remove language about funding and funding for public art should fall under municipal services. Mr. Favreau update the policy by removing funding recommendations. Victoria Foley asked if this would preclude the Public Art Commission from attaining other funding and Mr. Favreau said no, the commission would be able to apply for grant funding if desired.

- Victoria Foley proposed a motion to approve Public Art Policy as amended
- Ari Brandstein seconded the motion
- The motion was unanimously approved

3.2 Wayfinding

Mr. Favreau provided an update that the Wayfinding RFP would not be reissued until the new garage was built. Ms. Foley voiced concern that wayfinding is an evergreen issue and waiting until the garage was built would only delay a needed service. There was general discussion that is an important issue to the DDC since wayfinding encourages and supports people coming into the downtown. There was discussion about how to best approach this issue and encourage moving the wayfinding effort forward. It was discussed if the DDC could go to the City Council. Ms. Nadzo recommending tabling the discussion until the purpose of the DDC was more clearly articulated.

3.3 Pearl Point Park

Mr. Favreau presented an update that the plan was complete and finalized. There was general discussion about whether the information from the public survey had been incorporated. Mr. Favreau was not positive and would verify with Richardson & Associates they had received public survey results and they had been incorporated into latest version.

4. New Business

4.1 Purpose of DDC

Ms. Nadzo started the discussion by stating there seemed to be general sense of a lack of purpose among the DDC and felt it would be beneficial to revisit and revise the mission. Mr. Favreau stated the DDC was founded in the 1970s when there was no economic development department or Heart of Biddeford (HOB). Susan Swanton stated she had downloaded the ordinance and it was not relevant guidance to Biddeford's current situation. In the past, DDC had been in charge of hiring recreation staff and animosity had developed between the City and DDC around responsibilities.

There was a general discussion about the difference of HOB and the DDC. HOB is focused on advocacy for the downtown while DDC should be a more policy driven entity. It was discussed that HOB and DDC should have a more collaborative relationship so DDC can propose policies to City Council that best support HOB in their advocacy.

There was general discussion about Mr. Favreau's role. Mr. Favreau explained he was meant to guide the DDC through the process and the City Council representative's (William Emhiser) role is meant to be an advocate for the DDC agenda to the commission.

There was general discussion that since the DDC and the City Council had an acrimonious past, would the Council be open to hearing from DDC and Mr. Favreau stated that they would be and there needs to be some relationship building between the two entities.

The DDC generally agreed that the best approach to moving forward would be to rewrite the DDC ordinance to be more relevant and a sub-committee of the DDC should work together to create a new ordinance that would be submitted to City Council for approval.

- Mr. Favreau, Ari Brandstein and Camille White volunteered to rewrite the ordinance

5. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.