

Machias Revitalization Committee
December 14, 2018 @ 9:00 A.M.
Sunrise County Economic Council Building

Present: Angela Fochesato, Kehben Grier, Jim Jackson, Bill Kitchen, Sandi Malagara, Ryan Malagara, Gail Peters, Jennifer Peters, Joshua Rolfe, and Christina Therrien

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Chair Announcements: Angela announced that Anne Ball of Maine Downtown Center, Maine Development Foundation would not be joining us for the meeting. She had a family emergency out of state. She plans to be at the January meeting. However, we were given homework.

The Downtown Development Association is offering a free subscription to its webinars. Angela will send us the link. Our homework is to watch the video "Fixing Downtown Where the Heck Do We Start." It handles many aspects including answering your critics. Anne will be referring to this video when she meets with this committee.

Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented. Second. All agreed. Gail announced she will not be attending the January and February meetings. Christina offered to take minutes in January if she attends the meeting.

Reports: There are currently various projects in the downtown area. The committee wants to be part of the planning regarding those projects to ensure a consistent approach to shaping our downtown.

Anne Ball and Patricia Oh, of Age Friendly Maine (AARP) are working together. Their joint efforts are to make towns walk-able and accessible. Meetings have been held with MDOT regarding this issue. The committee wants Machias to be handicapped friendly, safe and accessible to all.

The Machias Savings Bank uses Atlantic Landscaping 's services. Atlantic Landscaping could work with the engineering firm to make sidewalks available for all of us.

That the bricks be fixed in the sidewalks and street lights possibly be mounted on the buildings to allow the bump outs to be removed. RH Foster is willing to work with the town on the sidewalk project. It is hoped that all the partners can work together to make Machias a live-able community.

Current question regarding the material to be used for sidewalks by MSB at their new building. Several options including using the current bricks and relevel them or tear them up and build stamped concrete. The brick sidewalk may not have had the best foundation for the climate here. Fred Hutchins and Linda Paegal attended a recent DART meeting. They were on the revitalization committee when the sidewalks were installed and may be a good source of information concerning the original project.

None the less, the sidewalks have been in place for many years. The bricks are still usable. They are an important resource which should not be discarded. The consensus of the group was reusing the present bricks and adding improved materials for a foundation. It would also give an historic feel to the area.

Several additional hopes and dreams were discussed including tying the current MSB building with their new parking lot via a covered walkway. It was suggested MSB create a green space around that new parking lot.

It is requested that buildings in the downtown area particularly new build or restored facilities have an historical component. The Machias selectman have supported this idea.

Emphasis on the archeological aspects of the town to discover what might be unearthed during construction. When construction occurs, the state Historic Preservation Office must sign off that there is no significance to an area to allow for permits and funding. Machias will always have its historic past to highlight.

It was requested that a TIFF zone be created for the business district. This designated area is currently under discussion and can be amended by request. The details of TIFF program can be complicated and esoteric for town members. Explanation and education sessions need to be held to better understand the use of TIFF's and the payback to the town particularly regarding educational reimbursements from the state. The next Selectman 's Meeting will be December 19th at 7:00 and will include this item on the agenda.

The building owned in the industrial park should be used for economic purposes for the town. Several suggestions were made about various funds available for downtown restoration for businesses. The designated area can include additional properties that qualify. TIFF funds can be awarded on the basis of historic preservation, blight and slum conditions, and economic impact.

What do we want and where do we go from here? (feedback for Anne Ball)

To have a timeline which lays out our efforts in an orderly fashion.

To finalize construction of a Riverwalk Edible Garden

To capitalize on the historic aspect of the town our greatest asset.

To allow for artists and other creative members of the community to flourish during our "gentrification" of the area. The Beehive Collective is at a crossroads. It is hoped the community will support their long-standing efforts to assist the place they love. A discussion ensued about the various beneficial aspects of the Beehive Collective making them and Machias a unique place.

To keep life in our downtown business area particularly at a time of transition for business owners.

To keep our historic buildings repaired, active and open at convenient times and days for tourists.

Discussion continued about the efforts of the local reenactors group including possible plans for Middle River, their videos being made available and making Margareta Days a three-day celebration. Joe McBrine is the unofficial leader of this group. Our history is our greatest resource.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: January 11, 2019 at 9:00. Tentative location Sunrise County Economic Council building on Ames Way, Machias.

Respectfully, Gail J. Peters, Secretary