

# **JOINT MEETING MINUTES - APRIL 3rd, 2018**

## **Wickford Economic Development Advisory Board**

### **North Kingstown Economic Development Advisory Board**

**WEDAB Members Present:** George Brennan, Martha Pughe, Curtis Givan, Palmer Beebe, Carrie Mitchell, Bjorn Wellenius, Sarah Folger

**EDAB Members Present:** Bjorn Wellenius, Curtis Givan, Palmer Beebe, Toby Sonder, Tom Charlton, Tom Miozzi, Robert Jackson, Kerrie Lannoie

Also attending Liz Dolan (EDA), Eve Clulow, Kevin Maloney (TC)

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 5:31pm
2. **Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's website**
3. **Minutes** – The WEDAB minutes for March were approved as presented.

#### **4. Old Business**

**Sale of 55 Brown Street** – Beebe described EDAB's proposed communication to the Town Council as distributed. EDAB was asked to clarify the form and context of the letter and attachments. Givan noted that the letter as written by Wellenius was sufficient. Charlton asked about the delivery method so that it could get reported in a timely manner. Clulow wanted to get the communication to the TC as soon as possible so it could be distributed. Wellenius asked Dolan to confirm TC receipt so that Clulow could then relay it soonest. Wellenius noted that the current public discussion would facilitate wider distribution. Pughe questioned whether EDAB could have an opinion. Dolan assured everyone that as advisors EDAB should have an opinion. Wellenius motioned that EDAB forward the letter and inclusions to TC as presented. Givan seconded. The EDAB approved the motion unanimously. Dolan informed the boards that the Wickford Plan Committee had supported the Annex sale and also the Old Library Project. Clulow asked if anyone had any questions regarding her assurance of a deeded easement held by PreserveRI.

**Old Library Theater (Annex) Development** – Beebe referenced a prepared outline for discussion and asked for comments. He also noted a copy of the Purchase and Sales agreement between the Town and Clulow was available online. Miozzi and Mitchell referenced concerns with the P&S relating to sewers that were satisfied later in the document. There was some discussion about the supporting letter from PreserveRI and Clulow noted that she would be paying the fee for the easement and PreserveRI oversight. Miozzi asked about a timetable for the development. Clulow estimated nine months with construction beginning late summer 2018 and a potential opening June 2019. Beebe called attention to the floor plan indicating the elevator, stairwell and vestibule addition on the south side of the building. Clulow mentioned meeting with Plum Beach Garden Club and

offering \$10,000 for Library Park restoration. Wellenius asked about language in the P&S subjecting the development to the outcome of the referendum. Clulow assured him that the language was satisfactory. Wellenius then asked about language in the P&S referencing Comp Plan compliance. Dolan mentioned that Planning Department staff felt that there were no conflicts. There was discussion about possible impacts of the Brown Street Design Guidelines on the Annex property. There is mention of protection from the guidelines if the associated zoning impacts of the development project. Charlton asked if there were any concerns about the possibility of building the back deck onto the Annex. Clulow stated that there were no concerns. Miozzi noted that the only stumbling block to the project was the referendum and asked how EDAB could help. Dolan said that the Town was sending out a mailer explaining the referendum. Wellenius asked if EDAB/WEDAB should offer an opinion at all on the project. Beebe stated that these groups are formed exactly for the purpose of advising the Town Council regarding projects of economic development significance. Pughe urged that although she appreciated the efforts of Clulow and wished her success, EDAB/WEDAB should refrain from endorsing a business and that it would set a dangerous precedent. Sonder agreed. Folger noted that EDAB/WEDAB can endorse the business use and type without endorsing the business plan. Pughe noted that the intentions of a business don't mean success and EDAB/WEDAB shouldn't attempt to pick winners. Lanoie agreed. Wellenius stated that there should be some aspects of the project that can be agreed upon, for instance the competitive process by which it came about beginning with the RFP. Beebe insisted that the job of these boards was to have an opinion. Charlton suggested that the boards distinguish the restoration and use of the building from the execution of the business plan. Dolan asked if the boards had issued an opinion about the development of Wickford El. Wellenius noted that the boards were extensively involved in public outreach but development plans were never finalized. Wellenius asserted that the Annex project selection process was impeccable and the boards could also endorse expected economic development impact if the project was successful. Miozzi stated the it was the responsibility of the boards to have an opinion. Beebe noted that EDAB/WEDAB must have an opinion because they are chosen as a diverse set of representatives from the community with varied experiences. Beebe also asked whether anyone could dream of a more perfect use for the Annex. Miozzi noted that the Old Library Project checks all of the boxes leading to a positive use for the property. Wellenius questioned whether the boards could come to an agreement at the current meeting. Brennan insisted that the purpose of the joint meeting was to do exactly that. Charlton suggested that the board attempt to form language that could be agreed upon. Lanoie suggested that a partial endorsement could harm Clulow. Sonder agreed. Brennan suggested that the boards should have an opinion to the best of it's ability and let it stand. Mitchell noted that these boards are being relied upon for an informed opinion. She continued that this proposal is one of several that may be presenting in the future as other town owned buildings search for a use. Maloney wondered if these boards should just support the Town Councils efforts. Folger suggested that WEDAB exists to examine and advise regarding proposals such as this. Wellenius wanted to agree on some points and a process for proceeding. Charlton noted that the time was late as the referendum was approaching. Dolan recalled the goals of the RFP which had included preservation, revitalization and community benefit, all of which the proposed project addresses. Folger suggested that the boards develop a motion that endorses the response to the RFP which meets the desired outcomes. Wellenius asked if the boards were capable

of coming to some agreement. Pughe and Sonder agreed that they would object to any endorsement.

Wellenius motioned that WEDAB produce an opinion on the Old Library Project. The motion carried 6-1. Wellenius then motioned that EDAB produce an opinion. It carried 5-2 .

Dolan began suggesting language for motions and Folger documented it. Once substantial edits were made by many from both WEDAB and EDAB, Charlton took note of EDAB's proposed motion. Wellenius suggested that the motions should be more descriptive and include requirements from the RFP. It was discussed and further decided to simplify the motions referencing the project and P&S as documented.

Once discussion was complete and the motions agreed upon Beebe requested a motion and vote from WEDAB.

WEDAB motion:

"Based upon the old library project proposal as presented by Chef Eve Clulow LLC and according to the terms the purchase and sales agreement that was executed between the Town of North Kingstown and Eve Clulow LLC on March 28, WEDAB endorses the old library project."

Motioned by Folger and seconded by Givan – passed 5-1.

Wellenius requested a motion and vote from EDAB.

EDAB motion:

"Based upon the old library project proposal as presented by Chef Eve Clulow LLC and according to the terms the P&S agreement that was executed between the Town of North Kingstown and Chef Eve Clulow LLC on March 28, 2018, the EDAB endorses the old library project."

Motioned by Charlton and seconded by Miozzi – passed 5-2

Beebe asked whether the motions should stand as they have just been publicly passed or should EDAB/WEDAB convey this support or reasoning further. All agreed that the approved motions spoke for themselves.

## **5. Future Business**

**Agenda Item Suggestions** – There were none.

6. **Public Comment** – There was none.

7. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.