

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2011
11:30 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison; Members Rachel Garcia, Tim Jones, Greg Klein, Roger Martin, Mike Simons, John Urban, Tina Whitley; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Deputy Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ABSENT: Members Paul Babinski, Bev Martin, Jerry McGuire and Bill Rhyne

ALSO PRESENT: Jay Camp; Steve Thomson; George McAllister; Jeff DeBellis; Stu Bantit; Mark Bryant; Dennis Harlow; Renee Hode

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 11:40 am.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Façade Grant application # 1

Planner Jay Camp addressed the Committee to summarize the details of the first Façade Grant application for property located at 189 North Trade Street and further identified as tax parcel 193-262-07. The property, formerly known as the Orr Building, was recently purchased. New owner and grant requestor Thomas Minieri plans to open a business entitled Planet Ballroom Dance Academy. Mr. Minieri is in the process of a complete interior renovation to accommodate his business. Mr. Camp explained that he has been working with Mr. Minieri regarding exterior renovations as well, which had not originally been planned.

The building, built circa 1900, is historically significant – it is one of only two historic commercial buildings left in town and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

The building has had multiple renovations over the years. Mr. Minieri will be restoring much of the historical accuracy to the building. Mr. Jones was concerned with the proposed aluminum windows and asked if they were chosen for their cost or effectiveness. Mr. Camp said it is a similar type of product used on Matthews Station Street. The windows will be fixed in place. He distributed photographs of other materials that could be used that would appear more historically appropriate.

There was some discussion of the requested grant amount of \$5,000. Mr. Justice explained that no Façade Grant money was used from the Fiscal Year 2010-11 budget. A recommendation would be made to the Town Board to appropriate money from the fund balance for this grant, if approved, so the program allowance from the previous fiscal year would be used and future applicants could draw from the Fiscal Year 2011-12 budget of \$7,500.

Mr. Urban discussed the need for cut sheets or samples to be submitted along with applications. He said it is necessary to see the exact materials rather than relying on written descriptions of planned materials. He also questioned the raised panel area and said he would prefer they use a cementitious product – hardy, durable cement-like products that don't have that metallic appearance - for the raised panel area. He said he is not opposed to an aluminum storefront, since the technology has been around for a hundred years, but that the aluminum panels would not be the best choice. He noted that the Board must decide if the town needs more historically representative work. The application could be approved with conditions that would bring some of that history back.

Consensus was to give direction to the applicant requesting that the door material be changed to wood and to reproduce the exterior to be historically appropriate. This would help if the owner were to apply for local historic landmark designation in the future.

Mr. Jones motioned to recommend approval of this grant with the condition that the applicant explore using wood or wood-like materials for the door and wainscoting to make the facade as period-appropriate as possible. Mr. Martin seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Business incubator presentation and discussion

George McAllister, Jeff DeBellis and Stu Bantit of the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) addressed the Committee. Mr. McAllister explained that the SBTDC worked with the town last year on a market assessment that turned out fairly positive. There is a general level of interest in a business incubator, and now the town must decide what type of incubator it would like.

Mr. Justice noted that representatives from Wingate University and Central Piedmont Community College were in attendance to join in the discussion and determine if partnerships might be possible. He also noted that the South Trade Street building formerly known as the Bradford Clinic may be available to be used as an incubator location.

Mr. DeBellis outlined some specific questions that needed to be answered in order for the SBTDC to understand what type of incubator program would be best for the town.

The general consensus was that the reasons to have an incubator were to contribute to employment growth and strengthen the tax base and to introduce Matthews as being a good place for successful, growing businesses.

Consensus also determined that the best candidates for an incubator would be innovative/creative companies and start-ups, followed by niche businesses.

Finally, consensus determined that an incubated business would be deemed successful if there was evidence of company expansion in terms of cash flow, employees and the like. The establishment of public/private partnerships and spin-off businesses in the community would also be seen as signs of success.

There was discussion of the actual workspace needed in the incubator facility. Space is needed for training and conference rooms. Interactivity between entrepreneurs is necessary since knowledge-sharing would be the most important aspect of the incubator. Physical items such as furniture and office equipment could be supplied. There is also the possibility of a more virtual facility with less face-to-face interaction.

The building at 196 South Trade Street may be too small to sustain a growing incubator with the needs described above. Mr. Urban noted that the first physical space may be just the catalyst. There needs to be buy-in from the

community and a commitment that can be proven to the Town Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners need to understand that a single building isn't the entire plan. EDAC will need to continually keep the Town Board members apprised of incubator details so that they keep them interested in the plan. He also said that partnerships with the local schools are needed.

Mr. Justice said a grassroots group of business leaders is needed to set the direction and gain business community support. It's possible that the incubator could eventually pass from being town-run to being run by other entities.

Mr. Bryant noted that it will be important to have multiple funding options. This group should attempt to create as many options as possible. Mr. DeBellis said the group also needs to think of partners who have not yet been identified, like stakeholders, sponsors, business leaders, et cetera.

SBTDC representatives will work on collating all today's information and will forward it to Mr. Justice for disbursement to the larger group.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Garcia motioned to adjourn. Mr. Jones seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Deputy Town Clerk