



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on January 24, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Paula Silva, Karen Dionne, Spencer Morris, Brandt Heckert, Kate Dickson, Priscilla Galligan, and Joel Carey. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB. Town Council Member Davison Bolster was present. Ex Officio member Caroline Wells was absent. Arnold Robinson was in attendance to discuss a graduate course in historic preservation planning being offered at Roger Williams University.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting on December 20, 2010

The minutes from the regular meeting held on December 20, 2010 were reviewed by the members via email. A motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

2. Discussion with Arnold Robinson regarding Historic Preservation Planning at RWU

Dr. Arnold Robinson from Roger Williams University was in attendance to inform the Board about a seminar he is leading this spring which will focus on the role of historic planning in Warren. Dr. Robinson is asking members of town government, as well as various boards and committees, to participate in the workgroup. Meetings will take place at the Liberty Street School over seven Mondays over the spring semester. The Board selected Mr. Morris and Ms. Volino to participate in the study. Dr. Robinson left the meeting after this agenda item.

3. Review and Action of 2011 Work Plan

Ms. Dionne presented the Board with a draft of the 2011 Work Plan; the Board reviewed objectives and refined action items.

The first objective focused on Downtown Business District Improvement. The Board agreed that the priority action for storefront improvement should be to develop a list of standards for business and property owners to follow. Ms. Dickson stated she would look into getting contacts regarding grant funding for displaying artwork in bus shelters.

Regarding the action on signage standards, Mr. Morris stated that it is the responsibility of the EDB to communicate standards to the community. The Board will create a workgroup to put together a brochure on signage standards. Also, the work group will document signage violations and present these issues to Town Council, as well as highlighting positive signage examples throughout town.

The development of a “Discover Warren” website was discussed as an action item under Objective 3, Marketing Warren. Ms. Dickson told the Board that she was already in the process of revitalizing Discover Warren and was already in the process of developing the Discover Warren website. Several action items under this objective, including “Pride in Warren”, creating PR opportunities, and the creation of a workgroup for town events, were integrated with the mission of Discover Warren. Ms. Dickson agreed to serve as the liaison between the EDB and Discover Warren. The Board agreed to remove the action item about the Narragansett Electric property from the work plan.

The Board discussed the development of a Warren Arts subcommittee which would focus on ways to promote Warren and the arts community. The subcommittee would bring ideas to the EDB and provide a connection between the business and the arts communities. The Board discussed developing a speaker program to educate the town boards and the business community and agreed on hosting two speakers per year. The Board decided to remove the creation of a business retention program from the work plan.

Ms. Volino stated that the first agenda item for the February meeting will be the final revision and the approval of the 2011 work plan. Ms. Dionne said she would send the draft around to the members for any final revisions.

4. Discussion and Action on 2011-2012 Budget

The Board came to a decision on the following budget items:

1. \$750.00 – Banners and mounting hardware
2. \$250.00 – Website development for Discover Warren
3. \$500.00 – Continuation of Business Guideline Brochure program
4. \$2500.00 – Completion of Phase 1 of the Parking Signage Program
5. \$3000.00 – Gateway Signage (2 signs)

\$7000.00 – Total Budget request for 2011-2012

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the 2011-2012 budget requests, Ms. Dionne seconded the motion, and all members were in favor. Ms. Volino stated that she would submit the budget request to the Town Manager.

5. Discussion on RFP and marketing plan for Liberty Street School

The Board discussed several issues regarding the Liberty Street School. Mr. Morris stressed the importance of being proactive with repairs and maintenance issues with the building. A motion was made by Mr. Heckert to submit a recommendation letter to Town Council regarding repair and remediation issues for the Liberty Street School, Ms. Silva seconded the motion, and all members were in favor. Mr. Morris said he would write the letter and that he would forward the letter to Ms. Volino and Mr. Heckert for review.

6. Update on Discover Warren

This agenda item was discussed as part of the 2011 Work Plan.

7. Discussion on creation of an Arts Council

This agenda item was discussed as part of the 2011 Work Plan.

A motion was made to adjourn, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald
February 22, 2011*

