

## **Belfast City Council Economic Development Work Session**

**December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

This is an outline of a free flowing discussion about Economic Development in Belfast that took place in a Council work session on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The items are listed without priority and without vocalized support by at least three members of the Council. While two members were unable to attend, one member did call in their comments which incorporated many statements made the prior evening in a Council Work Session on Goals for the year. I have tried to add the points raised in the prior meeting at the bottom ( Part Two) to tie the two work sessions together on the subject of economic development.

For this to be the basis of a City Plan for Economic Development we will need a vote of the Council with whatever additions or amendments the members deem appropriate.

### **Part One**

1. Pursue the idea of hiring a Full time Economic Development Staff person that reports to the City Manager.

Need to write a specific Job description

- Must be able to write and manage Grants including Community Development Block Grants
- Market the industrial Park
- be a resource for existing Belfast Businesses
- see if the retired business executive assistance programs are available (SCORE)
- Should be called "Director"
- put together an inventory of available commercial opportunities
- provide additional support to the City Manager and the City Planner as needed
- must work on things that will bring people here like retail growth
- work with the Council to define the type of growth (industrial, retail, hi tech etc.) we want
- pursue opportunities that are not here (business attraction)
- This is about a long term investment and we should not expect to see real improvements for several years.
- Critical to hire the "right person"
- further work on agricultural economy
- identify and evaluate assets and constraints for doing business in Belfast
- concern whether the position will merit the expenditure of funds (\$100,000 salary benefits expenses)

2. Getting Coastal Walkway done is Number One goal
3. Consider economically supporting ( create a small TIF District, contribute City land etc.) the construction of a business incubator that has loading dock space that could be used for up to four tenants ( Belfast Business Park as potential site)
4. Consider annually financially supporting a Maine Street Maine Program for Belfast that would target the Downtown area.

Part Two:

From the 2010 Work session on Council Goals

A. "Economic Development is the highest priority and should be aggressively pursued. Every little piece that can enhance economic development should. Use every existing resource- every day- and perhaps some new ones to treat economic development as an urgent response to our present and our future."

B. "Encourage and pursue the identification of a Private Group who will identify the financial feasibility of acquiring, renovating and operating an Events Center in Belfast and who will raise money and actually operate the facility with some level of financial support from the City."

C. Work to have the City be a model of energy efficiency and support the creation of renewable energy resources and the development and manufacturing of renewable resource materials. "Pursue renewable energy options for the City for local power, job enhancement etc. "

D." Revisit Contract Zoning on Route 3 Commercial Zone to include the Reny's parcel so that it is treated the same way as the "Les Hills" Parcel."

E. Enhance infrastructure amenities : " new BBQ grills City Park, Playground Equipment Wales Park " , "Look at extending downtown style street lighting farther up Main Street and farther North and South on High Streets" , " Get a report from the Hiking Biking and Pedestrian Committee on what they recommend the City can do to improve these safety and enhancing features of the City."

F. Improve the quality of our Communication and level of Cooperation

"Work as a body to display respect and some willingness to compromise that reflects the diversity of the community."

"Make sure our staff and committee's are sensitive to Council's economic development concerns and that they work to identify ways in which we can attract business and grow our economy more successfully than other communities in the broader region."

"Continue to do well what we do well every day but make a special proactive effort to get stuff done from small projects to big ones."

“Identify a number that matches a City Surplus policy and then develop a plan on what should be done with any money presently in excess of that number”