

Economic & Community Development Committee Meeting
May 8, 2025
5:30 pm, City Hall

Present: Shawn Dolley, Melissa Lindley, Christopher Leake, Carrie Arsenault, Chair Debby Willis, Jay Simanski, Mayor Pat Hart, Doug Baston, Tamara Whitmore

In the audience: Marc McDonald, City Manager Bob Peabody, Ken Mitsui

1. Review & Approve March & April minutes
 - a. Doug makes the motion to approve the March minutes. Pat seconds the motion. The motion passes.
 - b. Carrie makes the motion to approve the April minutes. Doug seconds the motion. The motion passes.
2. Public Comment - Marc McDonald
 - a. Marc brings to the committee the need for recreation in our parks and public spaces. In particular, he would like to see a basketball or pickle ball court on the Common.
 - i. Marc's personal observations from walking his dog several times a day at the Common is that the space is underutilized.
 - ii. Marc also reports that many of his friends, neighbors and other community acquaintances agree with his assessment.
 - b. Pat mentions that there is the Boys & Girls Club who handles recreation for youth and have done so for roughly 30 years. There is also the Quimby Field that is owned by the City and it is heavily used by team sports. The City has relied on these entities to provide recreation for the City residents, and we currently have no budget or department for additional recreational activities.
 - c. Discussion on the need for a survey of Gardiner residents to find out what types of activities they would like to see and where the best location for recreation facilities would be. Marc and Gardiner Main Street are both willing to work on a survey.
 - d. Circle back discussion later in the meeting:
 - i. The City will be commencing on an updated Comprehensive Plan in the near future
 - ii. As the planning process already includes significant polling of the community, and as comp plans look at locations of infrastructure, it seems most fitting that the surveying of residents on the topic of what types and location of recreational structures be tabled until it can be included in the Comp plan process.
 - iii. **Action Step:** Until then, it would be good to reinventory the resources we already have and their locations, and make sure this information is easily accessible to the public.

3. Credit Enhancement Agreement Application - [Core Cutter](#)
 - a. See summary handout provided by Melissa.
 - b. The equipment that is in the building is where the value lies (not in the building). Roughly \$1M per machine. The City also collects personal property tax on business equipment.
 - c. Core Cutter could utilize Maine's Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) Program for 100% tax exemption. The State reimburses the City 50% of the money in personal property tax that we lose due to a business claiming BETE.
 - d. Shawn feels that we should set a precedent on what percentage we will offer, to be fair to all as well as show enthusiasm to a business coming into Gardiner.
 - e. Council will want to know what the economic value to the City of Gardiner?
 - i. Substantial because of the investment in the machinery and the jobs.
 - ii. And those jobs are mostly entry level so fewer barriers.
 - iii. The Committee recommends that the Core Cutter business coming into the Industrial Park is of substantial value to the City of Gardiner, due to the value of machinery, and the addition of well paying jobs that include training for employees.
4. Arcade Improvement Redesign
 - a. Guest Ken Mitsui, Gardiner Main Street Vice-President, works for Commercial management company in Portland JH Brown and Sons
 - b. Islands that are kept in the next version of the design are because of the telephone polls that are existing.
 - c. Committee recommends that the design gain at least 5 spaces (or at least to counteract any net loss on Water Street during the Sidewalk project.
 - d. Melissa will bring these thoughts back to the engineer.
5. Robinson Street rezoning
 - a. Maps and photos presented to identify parcels in question.
 - b. Mr. Warren owns the Family Dollar building, and the US Cellular plaza, as well as the properties in question
 - c. Suggestion that the onerous of requesting a zoning change should be on the person who has a proposed project explaining the need and benefits of the change, rather than entertaining a change requested by a property owner so that the property has a higher likelihood to sell.
 - d. The City should also consider changes to zoning based on an updated Comp plan.
6. Downtown/Main Street updates
 - a. Dearborn Park Improvements
 - b. Business Owner Meeting - May 13 at 5pm in Library
7. Adjourn