



## Town of Ashland, *Office of Economic Development*

Economic Development Advisory Group  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 24, 2022  
3:00pm-4:00pm  
Location: Join Zoom Meeting

Opened meeting at 3:05pm

Attendance: Garrett Quinn, Dennis Ahern, Julia Chase, Pam Bathen, Beth Reynolds

Absent: Alan Macintosh

Economic Development Advisory Group

1. Business Incentive Program Review of Applications - Review of Zeta Fencing incentive application for sign and façade improvement grant. They had previously requested \$1,375.00 in reimbursement for a new sign on the front of the business located at 200 Homer Ave., this amount is half of the total project. However, once the owner Annette Pein went back to secure the vendor to do the project they were unavailable due to the pandemic and issues that have arisen since. Ms. Pein contacted the other vendors who all were unable to complete the work. Ms. Pein went back out to look for additional quotes and received three more all of which were higher than the original quotes. Ms. Pein is now requesting an additional \$1,192.50 to cover half the cost of the project. In total she is now requesting \$2,567.50. The monies requested will be used as reimbursement for 1 new sign located on the side of the building in a highly visible location. The applicant met all requirements listed in the rules and regulations set forth by the Select Board.

G. Quinn made motion to recommend the application for the amenities financing grant, D. Ahern seconded. Vote was unanimous to move forward and recommend the grant to the Select Board.

2. Reviewed Minutes from September 2nd 2021 and December 6th 2021 meetings. J. Chase made a motion to accept the minutes for both meetings. P. Bathen seconded, motion passed unanimously.

3. Business Incentive program was reviewed by Econ. Devlp. Director Beth Reynolds. B. Reynolds provided a recap of businesses that have received funding and current funding numbers. The group discussed the program in detail highlighting a few concerns and offered solutions:

- a) Accessibility: G. Quinn mentioned that advertising more of what the Economic Development office provides is a good idea. Educating commercial realtors and landlords of resources and sending targeted mailings could help spread the word about what is available.
- b) Overall Understanding: J. Chase mentioned that we should think about renaming the business incentive grant. Amenities Financing is confusing to people and the feedback she has received is that people aren't sure if they are an amenities business and question

if they qualify. Suggestion was to rename it Rental Assistance and Equipment Grant. Also thought it would be good to have a virtual meeting to explain programs and answer questions. J. Chase said the group could offer assistance trying to complete and application for anyone having trouble. Asking businesses that have received the funding to do a testimonial and share their experience to give examples of how the money was used.

- c) Inclusivity: The group talked about having grants translated to make sure we were inclusive to all business owners.

J. Chase asked that we edit the sign and façade improvement application to include they/them.

- 4. The group discussed goals for 2022 and discussed what their focus should be in 2022.
  - a) Goal 1: Update the Incentive Program Application to make it more accessible and inclusive.
  - b) Goal 2: Strive to set and meet measurable and track the amount of businesses we have helped. Goal would be to help 10 businesses to start.
  - c) Goal 3: Communications will be a focus to be sure we are reaching a wider audience.
  - d) Goal 4: Racial Equity. The group discussed making sure we are being inclusive of all businesses in Ashland. They would like to provide webinars about the resources that are available to all businesses in town. The group would like to see a survey distributed asking minority business owners if they feel their needs are being met and ask for feedback on how we can better serve all businesses in town.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Beth Reynolds  
Economic Development Director