



Town of Ashland, *Office of Economic Development*

Economic Development Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Opened meeting at 2:02pm

Attendance: Garrett Quinn, Dennis Ahern, Alan Macintosh, Julia Chase, Beth Reynolds

Absent: Pam Bathen

1. Business Incentive Program Review of Applications
 - B. Reynolds gave a recap of Town Meeting on May 4th. \$40,000 will be transferred to the business incentive program to cover costs of earlier applications and to potentially fund projects until June 30, 2022. There is currently \$42,874.76 in the account to fund grants through June 30, 2022. Previously approved applications (given funding was available) include \$6,000 for Zeta Fencing and \$10,000 for Crossroads PT & Wellness Rental Assistance. The remaining balance is \$21,126.76.
 - a. Review of Sentie's Kitchen. Group found that the application was incomplete and asked that it go back to the applicant for revision of addresses and detailed descriptions of items being requested in the incentive application. A. Macintosh made a motion to continue this application until applicant could revise it. J. Chase seconded, motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Review of Upperkuts Amenities Financing Application. Group discussed this business would bring in additional revenue to Ashland, liked the applicant's contribution to the project. J. Chase made a motion to accept the application for Amenities Financing and Rental Assistance in the amount of \$20,000 total for equipment and rent. A. Macintosh seconded. Vote was unanimous to move forward and recommend the grant to the Select Board.
 - c. Review of Ferraro Towing and Recovery rental assistance through the amenities financing grant application. Group discussed the application and could not justify the "but for" clause. G. Quinn noted that the lease did not seem strong enough to warrant the "need". B. Reynolds noted that the applicant must go before the planning board for a site plan review that is outstanding before opening the business. They moved to deny the application. A. Macintosh recused himself from the vote due to a personal relationship with the applicant. J. Chase made motion to deny the application for the amenities financing grant, D. Ahern seconded. Vote was 3-0-1. Application was denied and will not be recommended to the Select Board.

2. Reviewed Minutes from March 16th 2022 meeting. D. Ahern made a motion to accept the minutes. G. Quinn seconded, motion passed unanimously. J. Chase abstained because she was absent from March 16th meeting.
3. Econ. Devlp. Director, Beth Reynolds noted that the changes the group wished to make to the Business Incentive Program were now done. The Select Board will be informed at their meeting June 1 and the website has been updated. They discussed having “buckets” of funding where it is split up for different reasons (i.e. existing business, new business, minority owned businesses, rental and equipment vs. sign and façade.) However they ended with making a few changes to start and track progress. Below is a list of changes the advisory group made to the application, effective immediately.
 - Currently businesses that invest \$250,000 of personal funds to a new space are eligible to apply for additional funding of \$20,000. The group wanted to make sure the grant program helped as many businesses as possible and to ensure the town was receiving a high level of commitment from the business owners in return. They made the change to require a personal investment of \$750,000 to be eligible for an additional \$20,000.
 - Currently the grant funding is open to all businesses regardless of location. The group would like to specify that only commercial properties located along Route 126, Route 135, and the greater downtown area which includes Main Street, Front Street, Cherry Street, Homer Avenue and Summer Street will be eligible. This change will affect the Business Incentive Grant, as well as the Sign and Façade Grant.
 - The group felt that Amenities Financing Grant was confusing and chose to keep it very simple and straight forward. It will now be titled and referred to as the Business Incentive Grant Program (Rental and Equipment)
 - Minor grammatical and formatting changes in the application were also made.

The group discussed having this application available in different languages upon request, will provide support if needed to business owners that may need additional assistance completing the grant and we will work on providing a video to be viewed on the website with a step by step process. The goal of the group is to make this as accessible as possible for business owners.

4. Discussed Route 126 construction project and the ABA Future is So Bright event Thursday May 19th at 5pm. Encouraged group to attend.
5. Next Meeting date: June 8th 2022 at 2pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beth Reynolds
Economic Development Director