

Selectmen's Minutes 03/04/2016

Minutes of Meeting – March 4, 2016; meeting called to order at 1:32pm. Present: Ed Lane; Channing Gibson; Dave Roche; Ken Fowler; Warren Archey.

Town Planner and Land Use Director Gwen Miller presented her draft of the policy and procedure for evaluating applications for tax increment financing (TIF) and special tax agreements (STA).

The Selectmen discussed several elements of the proposed criteria including:

- Whether or not projects should be permitted before applying for a tax agreement
- Differentiating between seasonal and year-round employment
- How heavily to weight whether or not the project could take place in Lenox without a tax incentive agreement
- Different types of job creation – jobs on site vs. jobs provided as services to the business such as systems maintenance
- How various criteria should be weighted when considering an application
- Adding criteria related to recycling and sustainability

The Board discussed elements of the review criteria that needed to be further developed. Specifically, the Board wanted to see the point-range defined for low, mid-range and high level rated projects. These ratings further need to relate to both the duration and the percentage awarded in any agreements.

Mr. Rich Vinette, representing the Marriot project, recommended adding criteria related to other monetary benefits such as the hotel and meals tax. He further expressed concern about the timeframe for approval of the policy and subsequent approval of the Marriot STA application.

Ms. Kate McNulty Vaughan commented that the draft policy was weak on metrics and needed more sensitivity analysis on how incentives in one area have a dampening impact on other areas.

Mr. David Naseman expressed concern over the competitive effect of a tax agreement on other businesses in the same industry. Concern was expressed about tax incentives leading to a competitive disadvantage.

After receiving public comment and much discussion on the draft policy and procedure, the Selectmen instructed the Town Manager and the Town Planner to provide an updated draft based on the discussion prior to the Board's next meeting on March 9th.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05pm.

Minutes Taken By: _____
Christopher J. Ketchen
Town Manager

Minutes Accepted By: _____
Clerk
Board of Selectmen