

Town of Maggie Valley
Joint Meeting between the Board of Aldermen and the Maggie Valley Economic
Development Commission
May 11, 2010
MINUTES

Council Present: Mayor Roger McElroy, Aldermen: Colin Edwards, Saralyn Price,
and Scott Pauley
EDC Members Present: Ken Brown, Linda Bennett, and Beth Reece
Staff Present: Manager Tim Barth, Planning Director Nathan Clark, and Town
Clerk Vickie Best
Others Present: Jim Blyth

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor McElroy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Boardroom.

Brief Progress of Maggie Valley economic Development Committee

Chairman Brown provided the history of the MVEDC since inception. There have been several guest speakers i.e. Mark Clasby, with the Haywood EDC, Lynn Collins with the Haywood County TDA, and Sue Pendley representing Fall Days in Maggie Valley.

The members felt that the ordinance creating the MVEDC was very ambiguous. Therefore they were left to their own resources. Maggie Valley is facing a crisis situation with all of the empty stores, the mudslide, I-40 being closed for so long, and the snowy winter of 2009/10.

Proposal: Reinvestment Tax Credit Incentive

Several of the members canvassed the business community and found that they would like for tax incentives to be put into place. People want tax incentives to reinvest in their own businesses or to bring other businesses to Town.

Council agreed that in the long-term, property values would increase. When one property “dresses up” generally the surrounding area begins to “dress up”.

Director Clark stated that a threshold needed to be set, and money set aside to draw from. This would be a good incentive for business owners.

Due to budget constraints, Manager Barth explained that he did not know how much could be done this year. It could be multiple years that a business is rebated, as the improvements are enhanced.

Alderman Edwards asked that a policy be created. Once the policy is in place then the Town can begin to advertise the incentive.

Again, there are several ways to set incentives, such as access the value of the property, or require a building permit to be pulled.

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Alderman Pauley felt that people only see what is cosmetic. The work that would require a building permit would not necessarily be noticed.

Ms. Reece suggested handling it like a low interest loan and give details of what the money can be used to accomplish. Then assess the value or the cost of the improvements. There are vacant properties in Maggie Valley that would not be feasible to fix. "The numbers would never come out."

Ms. Bennett felt that it would be beneficial to improve the esthetics throughout the town in small ways i.e. flowers, banners, etc.

Mayor McElroy felt that this should be included in the budget and then each year continue to build up the fund.

Mr. Brown asked if the EDC could review the proposed budget and provide their opinion.

The proposed budget will become public May 17, 2010.

Ms. Reece felt that there must be enough business/tourist to generate funds for people to pay their taxes, regardless of the rate. The Town needs to work on getting people to come to Maggie Valley; "promote business, do not prevent business".

Mayor McElroy explained that the Town is trying to bring people to Town through the Festival Grounds and the hiring of a Festival Director.

Ms. Bennett added that it can be difficult to obtain a loan because real estate values have declined.

Director Clark will provide a draft document for the EDC to review in June.

Proposal: Sewer Impact Fee Payment Policy

The discussion led to deferring impact fees and setting up a payment plan.

The Town has provided a 30-60-90 day payment plan in the past. The sewer fees are based on the State flow chart. Mayor McElroy felt it would be difficult to change the rates at this point in time; especially since the Town just complete a Waste Water Treatment Plant expansion.

Alderman Pauley felt that the businesses need to feel that they are getting something back for their tax dollars. If additions were added on to current businesses, the monthly user fees would increase and the business would employ additional employees. It would be a win-win situation.

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Mr. Pauley asked what the board would do if the Health Facility decided they could not come to Maggie Valley due to the high impact fees. The Town would provide a payment plan. Mayor McElroy explained that the Town has gone in debt 3.5 million dollars for the treatment plant expansion.

Director Clark explained that the N.C. School of Government site shows sewer rates and if they are “healthy” sewer rates. A healthy rate meaning Maggie Valley is where it should be with the fees that should be charged to continue to operate a 1 million gallon treatment plant facility.

Open Comments: EDC

The EDC members are very interested in social and media networking. Maggie Valley does not meet the demographics for most of the companies mentioned in the Buxton Report.

The newly installed traffic counters will help identify some of the target markets.

Alderman Edwards left the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Bennett impressed upon Council the need for high speed internet. The website should be updated. “The Town must have an internet presence.” Ms. Bennett also suggested converting some of the older motels to other businesses.

Ms. Reece asked that the Town make and keep contact with any of the businesses that have shown interest.

Open Comments: Board of Aldermen

Alderman Pauley felt that Maggie Valley does not provide enough services i.e. a pharmacy and a grocery store. The Board should be operating with a mission/vision statement. “Without a vision statement, you can not measure accomplishments or the direction of the town.”

As for the Festival Grounds, Alderman Pauley felt that festivals serve two purposes; put heads in beds and provide visitors that are already here, something to do. The EDC should be empowered in order to move forward.

Mayor McElroy asked that the EDC look at the Town’s website and make suggestions.

Alderman Price felt the Town needed to grow in a controlled manner, but the vacant structures need to be filled.

Mr. Jim Blyth explained that he brought Staples and Burk’s Outlet to Waynesville. You must “court” these businesses continually. “There are people/businesses that are expanding. The Town needs to have the tools to go out and sell the Town. The Town

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needs to have a delegation to meet with people showing interest in Maggie Valley.” Mr. Blyth went on to say that the EDC and Council need to look at Townsend, Tennessee. The Town is similar to Maggie Valley.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 7:08 p.m.

Mayor Roger McElroy

Vickie Best, CMC, Town Clerk