

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Greenfield Business Association

April 12, 2022 | 8:30 am ZOOM

ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/7093692888>

Attendance: Mik Muller, Bill Baker, MJ Adams, Bob Sunderland, Isaac Mass, Judy Raper, Kriste Joy; Guest, Eric Twarog; Notes, Rachel Roberts

Items:

1. Guest: Eric Twarog

- Rachel asked Eric to discuss downtown parking planning and the marijuana businesses in the city with the board
 - Eric shared the host agreements the city has with various marijuana initiatives and where each was within the agreement process. He will email Rachel a list that can be shared with the board
 - 7 have gone through ZBA (5 retail and 2 cultivation)
 - Patriot Care is the only operational facility (medical & recreational)
 - At 5 year renewal period
 - As per financial agreements with city, it is the typical state agreement of \$15k the first year and 2nd/3rd years \$7250 each and 3% of sales
 - City has a plan or dedicated use for this money already
 - Eric moved the discussion towards the Complete Streets parking plans
 - TIPS funding and plan to start in 2027 so there's plenty of time for community input
 - Plan is to move downtown parking from angled to parallel and add a bike lane to both sides of Main Street.
 - The plans are all preliminary and part of something drafted in 2013/14 (?)
 - With the move to parallel parking, approximately 30% of Main Street parking would be lost
 - This plan encourages parking garage use; there's also the new library parking and Hope Street lot which after the Fire Station is moved will be open for parking again
 - Eric and MJ shared the city's awareness that parking needs to be better managed with improved signage
 - Eric expressed that DOT prefers plans to have adaptations towards parallel parking because it is safer.
 - This plan has space between cars (doors) and the bike lane.

- Bill explained that from a Main Street merchant's point of view moving towards parallel parking and losing 30% of spaces is disastrous to business. What we lose is greater than what we gain.
- With a statistically aging population, Isaac commented, the incline and distance the parking garage requires makes parking there and getting to Main Street a challenge. If we get a busy marijuana facility near the corner of the garage, it also may get busier and fill making finding spaces a challenge, too.
- With the interest in upper story development downtown, especially on Main Street, we need to be able to offer parking for those offices and/or residences. Taking parking away from Main Street while encouraging additional development like that seems at odds. Sure, ideally they'll park in the garage but if we lose Main Street parking and turn everyone towards the parking garage eventually there won't be reliable space there.
- A member shared they do not feel safe parking at the garage, especially at night. Unless something really changes there, they will never park there if it means using the garage in the dark. Another member mentioned that the police logs are full with references to needles or other negative things at the garage. The population that reads the newspaper might not feel comfortable there day or night.
- Kriste added that she's glad for this conversation and hopes the city gets lots of community input. Both as a resident and businessperson, what happens downtown is important to Greenfield overall. It's important that additional businesses don't shut down; we need a vibrant downtown.
- Bill added customers want convenience. Most are not going to walk from the Parking Garage to Main Street for a card or coffee they can get more conveniently somewhere else. If parking is reduced and then full in front of my store, I'm worried they'll just keep on driving instead of coming into my store for their needs.
- Isaac shared, under new construction building requirements the city would require a downtown business to have more parking spaces than are currently available to and near to us on Main Street.
- Members shared their concern that the article in BusinessWest made it seem like the parking restructuring plan was a done deal. If it's still in progress and taking public comments into account, it needs to be expressed differently.
- Questioning bike/pedestrian safety, Mik wondered what will happen as pedestrians need to cross the bike lane to get to their

cars or step into it briefly to walk around someone meandering on the sidewalks.

- Questions and answers:
 - Will sidewalks change? No, this is curb to curb roadway only. MJ is working on a Streetscape Improvement plan which includes sidewalks.
 - Is there a reason the bike lanes can't be redesigned/relocated to keep angled parking? This is a preliminary design. We will take into account public feedback.
 - Will the Library parking lot have permit parking or spaces for everyone? Not sure. I have envisioned for everyone with pay and display, but there is no decision that I'm aware of about that.
 - How can we manage mixed use parking which is probably a better solution than turning everything parallel? We have 5 years to consider that and get it right.
 - Has the city considered buying or renting the unused lots at Wilson's especially now that it is empty? Not that I know of but as it is part of Wilson's development listing it may not be possible. It is private property and we really have no jurisdiction over it.
 - What about the smaller Wilson's lot that's not part of the development parcel? Will propose that to the Mayor.
 - Will the bump outs be removed? Yes, that's what it looks like in this plan.
 - Where will the outdoor dining go if there are no bump outs and reduced parking options? We do want to maximize outdoor dining. It would probably move to the sidewalks.
 - What about ADA space needs on sidewalks? What about the trees? What about the pocket park near Bakers?
 - It is too soon to get into these types of details.
 - Were any business owners involved in drafting this Complete Streets plan? It was before our time, but no it doesn't look that way. It does seem like public input was involved, though.
- In closing this topic, both Eric and MJ offered that the city is hearing people that this design needs more public input. At this point, with so many changes and opportunities for downtown this should not be considered a static document. There will be more

opportunities for public input built into the process from business people, customers, residents—everyone. The city is planning to do a parking survey to better understand what we have, its best uses, its needs; the survey will certainly help us develop a better plan and management system for future parking.

**MJ requested that we move the MOTT report from action 6 because she needs to leave for another meeting.

(6.) Ongoing Updates (brief)

- Marketing
 - MOTT grant
 - MJ reported that the City of Gfd was awarded \$99,000 from MOTT for the Discover Greenfield MA marketing grant application. The grant application was written in collaboration with Rachel/GBA and the Franklin County Fairgrounds. The City would like to engage in a contract with GBA for Rachel's time and skills with marketing focused on in the grant. This would be in addition and separate from her GBA duties but would include marketing goals the GBA board has expressed interest in pursuing in the past.
 - Kriste added that Rachel presented the grant and scope of work the City would like the GBA's assistance with and thinks this is a win-win opportunity for the City and GBA (and another win for the Greenfield business community).
 - Rachel shared she would be expanding the marketing and business-business opportunities for the Farmers Market Opening, Bee Fest, Green River Fest, Franklin County Fair, and Vintage Days to highlight and expand Greenfield's reach and get more folks interested in the great things happening in Greenfield.
 - MJ asked the board for their support.
 - Isaac made the motion to support and authorize a contract between the City of Greenfield and GBA for 15 hours a week of Rachel's additional marketing time until the end of the MOTT grant period, granting a bit of wiggle in timing and hours as needed. Bob seconded. MJ abstained; all others in attendance voted yes. Motion passed.
 - MJ thanked the group. Rachel and MJ will share the contract once it is finalized. Mik, as GBA president, will need to sign it.

**Regular schedule of resumed, but due to time reports were brief

2. March 8 Minutes

- Rachel apologized for not completing the minutes in time to vote on and will get them out later today.

3. Finance

- No report

4. Reports (on recent or current activities and events)

- Rep Natalie Blais Meet & Greet
 - Mik reported light attendance but interesting conversations. Overall, a good event.
- MassHire Forum
 - Mik reminded the group this meeting was postponed to May.
 - Rachel shared that registration was light so after a conversation with Maura (MassHire) it was decided to postpone and weave what they were planning to do as part of the May forum together with this one. So, instead of only focusing the forum on employers, the May 24th forum will include discussion and resources for employment seekers as well.
 - Rachel also asked everyone to take note that the May forum date has changed from the calendar included with the April Agenda. MAY 24.

5. Upcoming Events / Activities

- Newsletter (Anita)
 - As Anita was not in attendance, Rachel reported that Rachel and Anita have started a shared folder for relevant news items. Mik will be training them on how to create and email the newsletter using the website. Things at work have been very busy for Anita so she has not been able to dedicate as much energy as she had hoped on this project. Focusing on a May or June launch at this point.
- Bee Fest
 - New BIG bees will be unveiled on May 21st. Rachel will send an email out to businesses requesting any bee or honey activities/incentives they want to run on May 21 can be emailed to the Bee Fest organizers and will be posted on their webpage for the event.
 - Rachel will be helping with the lamppost bees again this year. Like last year, GBA will receive \$15 from each bee sponsored in trade for Rachel's help
- Teen Day/Night
 - With so many things going on and Rachel's vacation/medical leave, this may be postponed again. Currently it is planned to start May 27.
- Annual Meeting
 - Rachel wants it to take the place of the June forum so it would be June 14 (usual BOD meeting date) at 5:30-6:30. We need to start planning for it.

- We need a few more board members. We are currently at 13 and can have 15. Rachel asked for members to think about who might be an asset to the board and let her know.
- Soapbox Derby
 - Mik asked if he could discuss the Derby here even though it isn't an official GBA event (he wishes it was).
 - The Derby needs a total of 25 racers signed up by April 30th to run the event. They have 10. Mik is at a loss as to how to reach more people/get more people interested.
 - Rachel wondered if it was the time of year or the fact that so many people/businesses are still struggling just to move forward with what they already have that adding another thing feels like too much. Mik reminded her that doesn't seem to be the issue as there's plenty of interest in Montague.
 - Mik asked for the board member's help trying to get more people interested and in getting a few more cars registered.

6. Ongoing Updates (brief)

- Marketing
 - #DiscoverGreenfield video project
 - Rachel has gotten the hard drive with previous videos and materials from Ben. She still needs to look through the drive to check everything needed is there.
 - Rachel has already connected with Rebecca Rideout, Told Videos, about scheduling the next batch of videos. They will be scheduled all for one week – which looks like 5/23-27.
 - Rachel mentioned that the previous videos will be released when Rebecca starts filming. Rachel needs to speak with past videos folks to make sure the videos are still relevant for a May launch.
 - MOTT grant
 - **previously discussed
- Membership
 - Rachel reported that while she hasn't met with any committees, invoices are going out and getting paid
 - More time is needed to get committees going
 - Isaac asked about what happened to the intern GBA was hoping to get through GCC. Rachel explained that the GCC position that coordinates interns is now vacant. Judy explained further that the current interns are within the college only at this point until the position is filled.

7. Other Updates / GBA Business (brief)

- Monthly Forums

- Rachel asked for help coming up with focus ideas. After May, she's all out of ideas.
- Rachel's schedule
 - Away 5/5-23 and working more hours to get as much done as possible before she leaves. Might ask for help with events/activities taking place (beyond her control to schedule) at that time.
- Restaurant Rescue Match
 - No progress. Rachel hopes to start this without a video and such—It's time
- Route 2 Rural Innovation Corridor
 - Rachel said due to her and others' vacation schedules she's not sure where things are at and asked if Judy knew anything that could be reported.
 - Judy shared the Entrepreneur Pitch Contest will be happening in Orange this time.
 - GCC is applying for a Rise grant to help support this project
 - This is a collaboration between GCC, GBA, Launchspace in Orange, and Greenspace CoWork.
- GBA/City monthly meeting
 - Canceled the past two months due to scheduling conflicts.
 - Will be this Thursday and Rachel believes it is happening as scheduled.

8. Sharing

- Skipped due to timing

Adjourn 9:52

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 8:30 am
ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/7093692888> (until further notice)
Open to all members

ANNUAL MEETING
Tuesday, June 14 at 5:30