

**Town of Norridgewock  
TIF Advisory Committee Minutes  
February 26, 2019**

Chairman John Malek called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM in the Conference Room at the Norridgewock Town Office. Committee Members Brandi Ireland, Ruth Keister, Becky Ketchum, and Drew Ketterer were present. Members Jessie Everett and Sallie Wilder were absent. Also in attendance for all or parts of the meeting was Town Manager Richard LaBelle.

Mr. Ketterer made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 23, 2018 meeting; the motion was seconded by Mrs. Keister. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee reviewed the revised façade improvement guidelines, with the adjustments made following the last meeting. The consensus was that the program would likely require future revision, but that it was an effective template with which to begin the program. Mr. Malek made a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they adopt the Town of Norridgewock Façade Improvement Program Guidelines and implement the program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ketterer; the motion passed unanimously.

The Town Manager provided an update on downtown street lights conversion, which was explored at the request of the committee. Initial price estimates are between \$30,000 and \$40,000 to replace all existing lights. This would include replacement of the poles and fixtures. Ms. Ketchum stated that she believes the Town Square would benefit from enhanced lighting and would like to see it included in any future bid specification. Mrs. Ireland noted that the presence of lighting improves the downtown appearance, but would also deter crime; she fully supports this investment. The committee, without motion, asked the Town Manager to draft bid specifications for the conversion of downtown street lighting.

The Town Manager presented previous discussions regarding the possibility of employing a firm to conduct a downtown revitalization plan. While the project can be costly, estimated at \$12,000 to \$15,000, it would create a more definitive guide for the committee in improving the local economy. Mrs. Ireland stated that she supports the idea of developing a plan and that it could be helpful to have feedback from such a project. Ms. Ketchum believes that it should be focused more on the downtown and improving the stretch of Main Street. The committee discussed the scope of the project and it is determined that the successful firm would explore whatever the demands were as they conducted interviews, surveys, etc. with the public. Mrs. Ireland made a motion to recommend that the Board of Selectmen employ a firm to conduct a downtown revitalization plan. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Keister; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ketterer commented that the bollard near Depot and Main Streets was replaced last fall and that, while it was a small investment, it makes a greater impact on the downtown. Mr. Ketterer stated that even a small project can make an impact and that it is only possible through the cooperation of the TIF Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Ketterer also noted that the committee should explore media options to broadcast the work of the TIF Committee. He believes that it is important to emphasize that work being facilitated by the TIF Committee does not come from the general tax base; it is money intended for economic development. The committee brainstorms methods of communication with the public. Mr. Malek noted the easy reach and broadcast of Facebook, while Mrs. Keister stated that many people read the Somerset Express. The committee will continue to be mindful of various methods for broader communication.

Mr. Malek discussed the work of the Historic Panel Design Committee, which is chaired by his wife. The panel committee is working to design two panels for placement near Sophie May Library. Mr. Malek suggested the TIF Committee consider purchasing duplicate panels and placing them in Oosoola Park near the boat launch. He believes that this site will have wider exposure, as there is minimal foot traffic near Sophie May Library. The Town Manager will contact the representative from Maine DOT to see if it is possible to purchase panels and what the approximate price would be. The committee will consider this item at its next meeting.

The committee discussed the railroad's impact on the downtown. Ms. Ketchum noted that the trestle over the Kennebec is becoming a serious hazard and inquires as to the responsibility for its cleanup and removal. Mr. Malek inquired about the progress being made with regards to repurposing the rail bed—a project that has been in the works for over a year. The Town Manager did not have a status update on the project. All members of the committee were very interested in the State's ability to pave over or remove the tracks that cross main roads in Norridgewock. The Town Manager will contact State Senator Farrin.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at 5:00 PM.

Mr. Malek declared the meeting adjourned at 6:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard LaBelle  
Town Manager