

FINAL MINUTES

EDC MEETING MINUTES

May 3, 2011

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:16 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Other members present were: Committee Secretary Beth MacDonald, Town Manager Russ Dean, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Selectmen's Rep. Julie Gilman, Planning Board Rep. Ken Knowles, Allison Field, Brian Lortie, Don Briselden, Madeleine Hamel, and Chamber Representative Mike Schidlovsky and new member Brandon Stauber.

Mr. Sandberg introduced Brandon Stauber, who was recently appointed to the EDC, to the Commission. Mr. Stauber said that he moved to Exeter last fall from California, where he was involved with economic development in the Los Angeles area. After graduate school, Mr. Stauber was the Associate Director of a regional technology alliance dealing with technology businesses in an economic time where people were losing jobs and beginning new businesses. Mr. Stauber currently has an internet business where he reviews and sells wine. The Commission members introduced themselves to Mr. Stauber and welcomed him.

2. Approval of minutes

Mr. Briselden moved to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2011 meeting. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

3. Exeter Town/Committee Reports

Ms. Gilman reported that the Energy Committee is interested in contributing to the Master Plan and possibly to the EDC as well. They are currently working toward a goal of reducing greenhouse gasses of the Town facilities. The Energy Committee also is looking at the idea of making Water Street a one way road so that there would be more parking opportunities without having to build a parking garage.

Mr. Dean stated that the Train Station Committee is working to get some business signage at the Train Station to increase revenue and notify train riders of town businesses and events. Mr. Dean met with DPW Director Jennifer Perry and Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock regarding the possibility of installing parking meters in a couple of town owned parking areas to increase revenue. Mr. Dean also stated that there are a few tax deeding items that pertain to local businesses, most notably the Ioka and Blue Ribbon Cleaners, and suggested that the Commission may try to partner with a third party to get these locations redeveloped.

Mr. Knowles asked if any Town improvements in the Lincoln Street area could be combined with the development plans for the area. Ms. Gilman said that the water main project in the area is at least two years away and Mr. Dean said that the Jady Hill area is a priority over the Lincoln Street area at this time.

Mr. Sandberg asked when the CIP (Capital Improvement Project) process will be complete, and Ms. von Aulock said that it finishes up in August each year, but that the EDC could review and endorse projects on the list. She suggested a short presentation to the EDC when the time comes.

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4. Discussion/Action Items

a. New Business

i. Preparations for EDC Visioning Meeting/Master Plan presentation

Presentation: Peter Michaud, NH Division of Cultural Resources

Mr. Sandberg introduced Peter Michaud, who is the National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives, & Easements Coordinator for the NH Division of Cultural Resources. He said that preservation is not about stopping change and development, but it is a method of planning for them. Preservation seeks to maintain the character of a space while allowing for and embracing changes. He said that there are preservation easements on some properties that dictate what can be done to a space and what cannot. The State offers programs that will give up to a 20% tax credit for certified preservation projects. The last credit program in Exeter was in the 1980's and the project was when the Mill was converted into apartments.

Mr. Michaud said that developers in Exeter are set up to take advantage of this credit, especially since the downtown is already a Historic District. To qualify for the credit program, developers must show the value of the project first and the credit can be used to pay for construction, and professional fees, amongst other expenses, but cannot be used for things like furnishings or advertising. The tax credit is returned by the IRS. Currently, there are a few of these projects in progress in other mill buildings in Nashua and Newmarket. Mr. Michaud said that this program is a great way to get a high quality product at a discounted price. Ms. von Aulock asked if new construction is eligible and Mr. Michaud said that it has to be a preservation project of an existing structure, citing a project at a Berlin school that is pooling credits as well as other programs to renew the school.

Ms. Field asked what the criteria was for a structure to be considered 'Historic'. Mr. Michaud said that the structure has to fit one of three criteria: it has to have a strong association with history, a connection to a famous person, or the architecture has to be unique or historic. Projects can use more than one criteria. The process for the credit program begins by creating a project plan with a preservation philosophy, and then the plans need to be reviewed and sent to the Park Service, which may add conditions to the project. Once they are approved there, the project commences. When it is finished, the project must be approved again and when the Park Service approves the completed project the IRS will issue the tax credit to the developer.

Ms. Gilman asked if Exeter's standing as a Certified Local Government would help in this process. Mr. Michaud said that it would not have any bearing on the tax credit programs but it does help in other grant processes from the Park Service. Mr. Dean suggested that the Commission review the businesses in town that may be able to benefit from this program. Mr. Michaud said that he would email links and contact information to Ms. Amport for distribution.

b. Old Business

West/Ex Project update

Station Spring Cleanup:

Volunteerism assists again: The station committee held a cleanup session this past Sat. Understandably not everyone could attend. Thanks to Bob Hall, Peter Meras, Cary Einhouse, Scott Bogel, Russ Dean, Julie Gilman and daughters for their efforts. Bags and bags of trash plus a truckload of brush was cleared from the track right of way (session 1). A follow up session to clean the parking lot will be

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scheduled for a later date, TBD. A list of maintenance items was prepared and will be forwarded to the town departments.

Station Project:

This continues to be a work in progress. Don and Jennifer Perry are working on the project timeline. Deed research regarding the station property lines and chain of title has been accomplished. A draft proposed project boundary has been prepared. Those items will be discussed with the Station Area Subcommittee on May 10th. A more specific update will be provided to the EDC at the next meeting in two weeks.

Signs:

UNH in Durham has put up some very nice signs at their train station for advertising as trains come into the station. They are double sided along the tracks and they bring in revenue, convey town events, and advertise businesses.

Mr. Briselden continues to work with DPW Director Jennifer Perry to work on smaller projects in the Train Station area that can be completed by DPW workers. The Ad Hoc Train Committee will meet in May 10.

6. EDC Subcommittee Reports

a. Executive- None

b. Finance- None.

c. Governance and Regulations- None.

d. Public Programs-

Subcommittee met on Wednesday, April 20 at 3:00pm in the Wheelwright Room to discuss the TIF program. They have a speaker coming to their May 5 meeting (3pm in the Wheelwright Room) named Jeff Taylor, the former director of the State office of Energy and Planning who has since started his own business. He has worked with TIG projects before and will offer insight into why they work or do not work.

e. Marketing and Communications- None

f. Business Retention & Recruitment-

Ms. Hamel said that this group met and are gathering information to review from an economic development perspective. They feel that Exeter is well placed between the Portland, Maine area and the Boston area and that quality of life is a strong factor in Exeter. They are looking into programs that are available for economic development, both public and private, that would encourage development. They are looking at other communities to find a model for Exeter. This group feels that involvement from current business owners would help to encourage potential new businesses to offer support and that the EDC should solicit commitments from businesses to participate in this process. Ms. Hamel said that there needs to be a better understanding of sites that are available for development or redevelopment and zoning restrictions, and that we need to be ready to respond when opportunities present themselves. Ms. Field said that some of these topics are being worked on by the Chamber EDC group and that working together could help the process along. Ms. Field will report back to this EDC group after her next

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Chamber EDC meeting with regards to what the Chamber EDC's plans are.

7. Meeting Schedule Review

The next meeting will be in two weeks, Tuesday, May 17, 2011 at 8:15am.

8. Announcements-

Ms. von Aulock said that the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee will meet next Friday, May 13 at 9am in the Nowak Room to discuss the signage issue. She is also working with the I.T. Department on a virtual tour of Exeter.

Mr. Dean said that the EDC has funds in the amount of about \$26,000. He also said that there has been some discussion of creating space for the EDC in the basement of the Town Hall that was previously rented to Provident Bank until it is rented again.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Brriselden moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary