

FINAL MINUTES

EDC MEETING MINUTES

June 28, 2011

1. Call Meeting to Order

Vice Chairwoman Caroline Amport convened the meeting at 8:19 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Other members present were: Secretary Beth MacDonald, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Selectmen's Rep. Julie Gilman, Christine Davis, Madeleine Hamel, Planning Board Rep. Kathy Corson, Treasurer Brian Lortie, Karel Kunz, Don Briselden and Selectman Don Clement.

2. Approval of minutes

Two minor amendments were made to the minutes; verification of a meeting time and name.

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the minutes of the May 31, 2011 meeting as amended. Ms.

MacDonald seconded. Vote: Unanimous. Mr. Briselden abstained because he was not in attendance at the meeting.

3. Discussion/Action Items

a. New Business

Ms. Amport introduced Beth Dupell from Exeter Copy and More. Ms. Dupell is speaking as a representative of the HERON (Historic Exeter Retail Owners Network) regarding the current sign ordinance and the proposed new sign ordinance that has been presented to the Board of Selectmen. The HERON group wanted the EDC to be aware of the changes that the Town intends to make in the enforcement of the ordinance. Currently, the ordinance prohibits sandwich boards, even though they are commonly used by the businesses downtown. There are no big changes to the ordinance itself, but the Town would like to start to enforce the ordinance, which the retailers are opposed to. This would prohibit sale racks, tables and signs from the sidewalks. Ms. Dupell said that the sandwich boards are a historic part of retail in the downtown and that they should be allowed to continue. Since the HERON group believes that forbidding the sign boards would be detrimental to their businesses, they have come to the EDC for support.

Ms. Gilman said that the HDC recommended the possibility of having a particular size and type of sign boards in the downtown. Ms. Amport asked if there was a waiver that available to enable merchants to have items on the sidewalk. Mr. Eastman said that there is no such waiver currently. He said that he needs to enforce what is on the books now and move forward. Mr. Clement said that the Board is asking for input on this issue from the Police Department, Fire Department and the Safety Committee. Ms. Dupell thanked the Commission for giving her the opportunity to present her issue to the EDC.

i. Preparations for EDC Visioning Meeting/Master Plan presentation

Ms. Amport introduced Michael Bergeron from the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development where he is the Business Development Manager. Mr. Bergeron presented a PowerPoint presentation for the group. Mr. Bergeron said that overall, the economic conditions are better in NH than in the nation as a whole or in the surrounding states, and that the current wildcards are housing and National Debt, noting that home sales are still declining.

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In reference to creating economic development in the Exeter area, Mr. Bergeron thinks that Exeter needs to build relationships with its large businesses and find out what they like and dislike about doing business in Exeter. The Town needs to stay in touch with their businesses through communications, gatherings, and perhaps implement an award program to recognize achievements. The Town should participate in groundbreakings and openings as well as have a 12 month plan to promote business through media. He also suggests keeping in touch with developers in the area and look at the real estate base in town, clearing up red tape items so that if someone is interested in a space, the process will be more streamlined for them.

Mr. Bergeron notes that commercial real estate is overpriced in Exeter as compared with other surrounding towns and gave a few examples of commercial properties in surrounding towns that are much more attractive. Mr. Bergeron notes that excellent customer service is very important when a company is shopping around for locations to do business, and that the fewer obstacles there are, the more attractive the town will be, noting that delays will deter businesses from pursuing a space here.

Mr. Bergeron did some website research and noted that Exeter does not have any reference to business on its website and there are only landscapes, no people on it either. There is also no contact information to get in touch with board and committee members and not many links to community businesses. Mr. Bergeron thanked the EDC for inviting him to speak and offered to give a presentation to the Board of Selectmen or Planning Board if they thought it would be beneficial.

4. EDC Subcommittee Reports

a. Executive- The RFP for the visioning session facilitator is complete and has been posted on the Town's website and sent to 6 consultants. They are due by July 6, 2011 at 4:00.

b. Finance- None.

c. Governance and Regulations- Ms. Gilman asked for input from departments for the vendor permit policy. The Board of Selectmen would like the subcommittee to present ideas to them. They are looking at the vending permits of surrounding communities.

d. Public Programs- The TIF group met and Mr. Briselden offered a prior email update.

e. Marketing and Communications- None

f. Business Retention & Recruitment- Ms. Hamel submitted a summary of the last meeting via email to all members and she gave a recap of the summary to the group.

5. Meeting Schedule Review

The next meeting will be in two weeks, Tuesday, July 12, 2011 at 8:15am.

6. Announcements-

Mr. Briselden emailed an update of the West Ex project.

Ms. Gilman announced that the HDC had approved their first project for solar panels and the Energy Committee is selecting a vendor for their solar project. The Heritage Commission was approved for a

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grant in the amount of \$12,800 for a mapping project.

Ms. Corson said that the Planning Board is hearing a case for Riverwoods to demolish a house on Kingston Road to put an office building and a park.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Gilman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35. Mr. Kunz seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary