

FINAL MINUTES

EDC MEETING MINUTES

July 26, 2011

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:20 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Other members present were: Secretary Beth MacDonald, Town Manager Russell Dean, Selectwoman Julie Gilman, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Madeleine Hamel, Planning Board Rep. Kathy Corson, Christine Davis, Don Briselden, Allison Field, Karel Kunz, Mike Schidlovsky, Brandon Stauber and Selectman Don Clement.

2. Approval of minutes

Ms. MacDonald moved to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2011 meeting as presented. Ms. Hamel seconded. Vote: Unanimous. Mr. Stauber and Ms. Gilman abstained.

3. Announcements

Mr. Stauber announced that the Town had received a DES notice regarding a groundwater treatment plant and water meter replacements. Mr. Dean responded that he had notified the Board of Selectmen about the notice as well as the State's 20% forgiveness on each of the projects at their regular meeting the night before. When asked where he got this information, Mr. Stauber responded that he received an email from Renee O'Barton.

Ms. Corson noted that there were some interesting articles on the Boston Globe's "Globe North" section on Sunday regarding rezoning in Amesbury for more commercial use and economic development in Rockport that is working toward offering year round attractions to the area.

Mr. Dean reported that he went to a grand opening for Service Credit Union last week which recently merged with Service Credit Union.

Ms. Gilman reported that the former Ocean Bank site on Lincoln Street has been purchased by the St. Vincent DePaul Society, so it is no longer available for Town purposes.

Ms. Field said that she spoke with State Senator Prescott at a recent event and that he told her that he has heard that Audi was looking into building a facility in New Hampshire. She asked him to suggest Exeter if the opportunity comes up. Ms. Field said that she believes it is a good opportunity to reach out to elected officials regarding growth prospects. Ms. Davis will follow up at the State level and report back any information that she finds about Audi's plans.

3. Discussion/Action Items

a. New Business- Guest Speaker Eric Chinburg

Ms. MacDonald introduced Eric Chinburg to the EDC, noting that Mr. Chinburg started building in the area in 1987 and he is currently doing a TIF project at the Newmarket Mill.

Mr. Chinburg said that he is currently doing a Mill project in Newmarket but that there was another TIF project in Newmarket about 10 years ago that was to do the first half of the mills. He said that one of the factors that he looks at when deciding to work in a town is to see whether or not they are "open for

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business”, which is a feeling that you get by talking to people in the town, both employees and residents, about how open the town is to working with developers. Mr. Chinburg cited Durham as an example of a place that was not very welcoming many years ago but they have been through a lot of changes over the years and are more open than they used to be, but the perception remains that they are not.

Mr. Chinburg noted that the Exeter EDC group is quite large, which he finds encouraging. When projects are proposed, he said that it is common for the only people to speak up are those who are against the project, but in a town like Exeter, the EDC can speak as residents in support of development plans. Also, within the Town’s departments, there are often conflicts during development processes, but having people like the EDC to help smooth them over can be very helpful.

As far as the downtown area, Mr. Chinburg noted that State statute 79(e) can be adopted by the town in order to encourage developers to make improvements to old buildings in exchange for a lower tax rate for up to 9 years.

On the subject of zoning, Mr. Chinburg said that some towns have very restrictive zoning ordinances, so it can be very beneficial for the Building and Planning Departments to put together a ‘Developing for Dummies’ type of cheat sheet so that anyone developing in the town will know the processes and giving them a sense of predictability as well as helping them to see if the process is something they want to pursue. Also, when it comes to state rules, it helps if towns do not ‘double down on the restrictions that already exist at the state level because it becomes restrictive.

From the perspective of the developer, Mr. Chinburg said that it is important to understand the time, effort and cost that is being put into these development projects and to work together to streamline the process. If a developer knows that they will have to go in front of a committee with every change as the project progresses, they are less likely pursue projects in that town and word spreads in the development community. Also, when a developer is happy about their dealings in a given town, they tend to spread the word with colleagues.

Mr. Stauber asked where Exeter falls in the perception of developers. Mr. Chinburg said that if town representatives went to developer association meetings they could spread the word that they are looking for development, and that they should make sure that DPW, Police and Fire Departments are also on the same page. Mr. Chinburg noted that there are some unwelcoming aspects to Town, such as the numerous ‘No Parking’ signs all the way down Swasey Parkway, for example, but that when officials support ideas and help to advocate for projects in a town, it helps to smooth the developer’s mind about doing business in the town.

Mr. Kunz asked if Mr. Chinburg had any ideas about the Epping Road area near the new Meetinghouse Building, and Mr. Chinburg said that development is tough right now due to the economic climate, but that flexible zoning in the area will help. Ms. Field said that the commercial lending environment is difficult because of the viability of new businesses.

Ms. Hamel asked if there have been any roadblocks to the TIF program in Newmarket. Mr. Chinburg said that there were 2 failed TIF projects in town but that Newmarket made adjustments to get the project done.

Mr. Sandberg thanked Mr. Chinburg for his time and valuable information.

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Mr. Briselden said that the EEDC should build on what Mr. Chinburg said and build a partnership for progress, showing developers and builders that Exeter is “open for business”.

Ms. Hamel noted that Newmarket has rewritten their Economic Development section of their Master Plan if anyone wanted to reference it. Also, she also said that there have been a number of good articles in the paper lately that deal with economic development and that a regional approach is noted in them.

b. Old Business: West Ex Update

Mr. Briselden reported that the Station project is going well. The group met with the Goupils and started Phase I with RPC. Funding is coming in October. The next meeting is on August 16 to begin to set up the next West Ex community meeting in September.

4. EDC Subcommittee Reports

a. Executive- None.

b. Finance- None.

c. Governance and Regulations- None.

d. Public Programs- Ms. Von Aulock said that she is working on a TIF CIP item. She called the Londonderry Planner and found that Londonderry had hired a marketing person and a consultant to create the bond and then the bond failed but the TIF passed. Londonderry suggested a lot of community outreach to develop support and quell fears about the process.

e. Marketing and Communications- None

f. Business Retention & Recruitment- Ms. Hamel said that she would like to make a formal recommendation for an intern to help the EDC with administrative duties. The subcommittee is currently drafting goals and objectives and gathering information on ER districts, which may be easier and quicker than TIF districts. Mr. Dean is pursuing intern options at UNH and he is also talking to Keene about their TIF success. Mr. Dean said that Keene is willing to help Exeter with TIF issues.

5. Meeting Schedule Review- TBD

6. Announcements-

Mr. Dean said that the CEDS report is available on the Town website. He said that the Board of Selectmen approved the new sign ordinance the night before. There are reports that Sig is planning to move out of Exeter and that they are experiencing growth without space to move to in their current location. Mr. Dean also noted that he is being told that Pease is offering no school tax to businesses that are thinking of moving there.

Mr. Sandberg said that he and Ms. Corson have interviewed one facilitator and will be finishing with another at the end of the week. He asked if the group wanted to approve the choice or if the EDC wants the Executive Committee to finalize and hire the facilitator. Mr. Briselden said that he prefers that the Executive Committee make the decision and there was general consensus in the room. Mr. Stauber asked about the cost and Mr. Sandberg said it would be \$1500-\$2000. Mr. Stauber said that he thought it would be less based on past conversations.

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Ms. Davis moved to authorize the Executive Committee to finish interviews and select a facilitator with a cost cap of \$2,000. Mr. Briselden seconded. Vote 4-5. Motion failed.

Ms. Gilman said she is opposed to the cost cap because if there is additional cost that would be beneficial, the EDC should be open to it.

Ms. MacDonald moved to authorize the Executive Committee to finish interviews and select a facilitator without a cost cap. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote 6-1. Motion carries

7. Adjournment

Mr. Dean moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:48. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary