

Exeter Economic Development Commission

February 21, 2012

1. Call meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:20 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Members present were: Brian Lortie, Madeleine Hamel, Brandon Stauber, Lizabeth McDonald, Planning Board rep. Kathy Corson, Selectman rep. Julie Gilman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Selectman Don Clement and Town Manager Russ Dean.

Guest: Jason Brown, intern for EEDC

2. Approval of minutes

In asking for corrections or modifications to the draft minutes of January 31, 2012, Mr. Dean noted the correct spelling for the engineering firm on the Statham water/sewer project to be *Kleinfelder* and the date for the Town deliberative session was February 4, 2012. With no other corrections, Ms. Gilman moved to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Ms. Corson. Vote: unanimous with Mr. Stauber and Ms. MacDonald abstaining as they were not present at that meeting, (Ms. Hamel was not present for the vote)

3. Discussion/Action Items

• **Update on ER Zone Application**

Mr. Dean reported the application was approved by the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen and now will move on to DRED for State acceptance.

Ms. Corson credited the comprehensive Power Point presentation on the proposed ER Zone given by Ms. von Aulock to the Planning Board for the ease of acceptance. Mr. Sandburg re-iterated his thanks to the Town Office and Planning Department for assembling the data and completing the application in a relatively short amount of time; within the last three months.

Ms. MacDonald commented she noticed roadside signs in other communities with ER Zones designating such an area; more follow up to determine if it was the community or the State that placed the signage. Ms. MacDonald also inquired as to how the property and business owners in the designated area will learn of the designation.

Suggestions were to have an invitation-type forum perhaps hosted by EEDC and Planning Department for those property/business owners and brokers in the proposed zone. Ms. von Aulock agreed to do the Power Point presentation as background for such a designation and perhaps have Ms. Davis or a DRED representative do the follow up; acquaint the attendees of the criteria and walk them through the application.

It was agreed to wait for the State to approve or comment on the application before any definitive action be taken, but Mr. Sandberg did comment with the Business Retention and Expansion working subcommittee in place perhaps Ms. Hamel could put together a group to follow up and seek out volunteers to host the forum.

• **Update on Exeter Theater Company (Ioka)**

Ms. Gilman reported they are continuing to work on growing their membership base of 1000 members by March 31, 2012. Six more visioning sessions are scheduled in neighboring communities this month to seek the support and involvement of the region and not just Exeter.

*Minutes approved with minor adjustment at
EEDC meeting on March 6, 2012*

- **Discussion of new vice-chair**

With the resignation of Vice –Chairman, Caroline Amport from the EEDC, Mr. Sandberg asked Secretary Lizabeth MacDonald if she would be willing to assume the position during this transition period. She did agree to do so.

- **Discussion of membership and Officers of EEDC**

It was confirmed there are at this time two open seats on the Commission. Currently, it is a Commission of 10 members and the by-laws permit a membership of up to twelve. The group is actively seeking to fill the two vacancies. An individual interested in becoming a member may download the volunteer application from the Town website and when complete submit to the Town Office as they schedule the interviews with the Selectmen.

Citing the bylaws, Mr. Dean confirmed the three positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary comprises the Executive Committee and shall serve for one-year terms and may be re-elected. At present all members are in their first year of a four-year term. It was suggested staggered terms be looked at as that is the format for most of the other Town Commissions and Committees. Presently, memberships on those Boards/Commissions go until April 30 and the election of officers takes place at the next meeting.

Mr. Sandberg confirmed the group was following protocol and determining a slate of officers and voting could be a future agenda item. In the interim, he and Ms. MacDonald will serve as the Executive Committee until the election of officers later this spring.

- **Discussion of meeting time and format**

Mr. Sandberg felt going to a monthly meeting would be sufficient and appropriate at this time. It would permit working groups to meet in the interim and follow up on their projects and submit to the Executive Committee for review before the next meeting.

An opinion was expressed of a subcommittee being at a standstill with a project when all the materials are prepared and ready to go and then having to wait the month for the full Commission meeting for approval to move forward.

Discussion focused on material being forwarded to the Executive Committee for review and unless it involved new initiatives, policy and procedures, expenditures, they could grant approval. Mr. Dean did comment there might be a judgment call determining if the material presented should be seen and approved by the full Commission.

Ms. von Aulock commenting from her real life experiences, if the Executive Committee is approving an action of a sub committee and if for any reason a business/individual becomes disgruntled and the issue becomes distorted the Executive Committee doesn't represent the Commission and the full Commission isn't aware or approved the content of the material. She does not want to get into a situation where Executive Committee is acting as a full Commission. Her suggestion is the Executive Committee approve a detailed draft of what is being proposed with possible conditions to be included and then bring to full Commission for action but allows for simple changes.

Ms. Gilman agreed and felt there were some “right to know” issues involved. It is not ideal if the Executive Committee is making a decision without the rest of the Commission having input.

*Minutes approved with minor adjustment at
EEDC meeting on March 6, 2012*

Mr. Sandberg summarized what he heard and understood the expressions put forth. With the Commission meeting regularly twice monthly for the past fourteen months he was looking to ensure the work of the Commission gets done in a fair manner where everyone has input and keeps the momentum of the Commission going. He understood the possible ramifications of making decisions without all members of the Commission at the table.

In responding to the Commission looking at the tasks accomplished as benchmarks as outlined in the EEDC Action Plan developed in September 2011 as a guide to tracking the groups goals, Mr. Dean noted item 2.6: *Economic development chapter of master plan developed with current business owners and public* as having a high number of votes in priority and that in itself was an big task and could take the remainder of the year to thoroughly develop that piece.

Ms. MacDonald felt this was part of the natural progression of putting together a group like the Commission and just part of the evolution in its growth. The education (of the group) has taken place and this was a positive discussion reflective of a group anxious to accomplish these tasks. She offered the idea of having a scheduled 90 minute meeting devoting 45 minutes for the formal agenda items and then devoting 45 minutes to those sub committees wishing to present their project.

Ms. von Aulock wasn't sure all that could be accomplished in the hour and half time allotment and suggested lengthening the meeting time. Further discussion brought forward the suggestion a formal monthly meeting be scheduled to approve minutes, hear reports from the Town departments, etc. but then schedule one other meeting to serve as a working session. This would permit a subcommittee to present their project fully and in more detail.

Mr. Sandberg wondered of the logistics of scheduling a second meeting and would there be a quorum present to do the Commission's business.

There was a consensus among some members for a monthly meeting but to be sure sufficient time is allotted for a sub committee's presentations. Ms. Gilman thought it would be just an adjustment period as the group is accustomed to the present bi-monthly meeting,

An earlier start time as well as extending the meeting time was also put forth. Ms. Corson added perhaps an evening meeting?

Ms. Corson went back to the suggestion of the two meetings but modified it by suggesting to block out the twice-a-month meeting time and at the first monthly meeting determine what group would be presenting their plan at the second scheduled meeting and if no group was ready or planned to be ready, the meeting could be canceled at that time.

Mr. Sandberg summarized the options presented at this meeting but felt no decision could be made at this time. He will seek input from Ms. Davis and Mr. Benjamin who were not present and then review the ideas and at the next meeting with the options outlined, the Commission could decide the direction it wished to proceed.

- **Business Retention and Expansion**

Ms. Hamel stated her committee will be requesting volunteers from the Commission to participate in visiting the companies after the letter has been received and appointments scheduled. The letter will be going out to thirty companies.

*Minutes approved with minor adjustment at
EEDC meeting on March 6, 2012*

She anticipated presenting the work group's packet containing the outreach letter, draft questions and reference sheet at the March 6, 2012 meeting. It was agreed to send the packet electronically to the members prior to the meeting for their review. She did state because of the confidentiality issue she would not send along the list of companies to receive the mailing; did not want the names of the companies pre-released. She also added no businesses located in the ER Zone would receive this initial mailing: that may be done at a separate time.

• **Branding and Marketing**

With the resignation of Ms. Ampert who served on this sub committee, Mr. Stauber felt he needed a new member or two. They weren't running into any deadlines but do have issues pending.

It was stated members of sub committees do not have to be members of the full Commission nor do they have to be residents of the Town. However after some discussion, it was agreed to advise the Chairman of the individual and their qualifications. It would be desirable if they could attend an EEDC meeting.

Mr. Sandberg did agree to put together with the assistance of the Executive Committee a volunteer policy.

Continuing with the working group's task of web site development, Ms. Hamel raised the question of needing permission to list various links on the EEDC page of Town web site. Mr. Stauber answered from his experience it is not necessary but might want to add the disclaimer that *you are leaving the Exeter Town web site and not responsible for any content on sites referenced.*

Mr. Clement did agree that will be discussed with the chosen designer of the new Town web site.

4. Town updates

Mr. Dean reported on the status of the baggage building appraisal and his and Mr. Clements attendance at a recent Exeter/Stratham water/sewer meeting.

Ms. Gilman reported on a series of public meeting being held around the State by DOT on multi-modal transportation service within the State and train service is included. At this time the Downeaster receives no financial support from the State. Ultimately any funding authorization comes from the Governor's Council. Mr. Dean added the organization *Trainriders northeast* has an excellent website trainridersne.org which keeps individuals informed of train issues

Also, the American Independence Museum is planning for their July 2012 festival and would like representation from the Town. Ms. Gilman suggested an EEDC member become involved as it is an excellent opportunity to be connected to a Town event. Taking it a step further, Mr. Stauber felt the Commission should have a table at the Festival with marketing material as it attracts many visitors from out of town. Interested volunteers should contact Ms. Gilman.

5. Next meeting date is March 6, 2012 at 8:15 am

6. Adjournment

Mr. Lortie motioned to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Corson. Vote carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am

Respectfully submitted,
Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary