

**Exeter Economic Development Commission**

**March 20, 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: Len Benjamin, Brandon Stauber, Kathy Corson, Selectman rep. Julie Gilman, Christine Davis, Lizabeth MacDonald, Madeleine Hamel, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Selectman Don Clement, Town Manager Russ Dean and Intern Jason Brown.

**Approval of minutes**

Ms. Gilman moved to accept the draft minutes of March 6, 2012 as submitted; seconded by Ms. MacDonald. Motion carried. Ms. Corson abstained as she was not present at that meeting.

**2. Discussion/Action Items**

**Work group update**

**• Business Retention and Expansion**

Mr. Sandberg prefaced the work group update noting the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee did meet after the last meeting and revamped their agenda and approach based on some of the discussion at the March 6, 2012 meeting.

Speaking for the group, Ms. Davis acknowledged some of the confusion was possibly with other groups in the community doing outreach programs and perhaps some confusion on what was the agenda and motives of this working group.

Recounting her experience in a neighboring community, she and a member of the town Chamber of Commerce called upon a local business to say hello, let them know they were there and to thank them for being in the community. Let them know you are there as a resource; be proactive. The visit was very well received and that was the intention of this group; we appreciate you being here and we'll do what we can. Referring to a revised Meeting Notes form distributed to the members, Ms. Davis noted some items remained on the topic list if she were present at the meeting—and she anticipated she would be especially with the larger companies—she as a DRED representative, could ask those questions. She wants to determine their needs and if she can be of any help.

She then passed on a very recent occurrence where she met with an Exeter business, advised them of State resources and that she was also a volunteer on the EEDC; received favorable comments. All seemed to be going well and felt it was a good meeting. In parting, she restated if she could be of any assistance to contact her. She received an email shortly after the visit asking for her assistance in their intent to expand. At the time of her visit, they did not need anything but she emphasized at the meeting we're here and we'll see what we can do. That is what it is about: stop in and see your (Town) businesses.

When asked by the Chair as to the level of preparedness with which the group is to start the outreach program, Ms. Corson replied "We are ready." It was stressed by Ms. Hamel and Ms. Corson the need to get out there and let the businesses know of the EEDC and its mission and goals; how it may serve as a resource for them. Ms. Hamel added they were in addition asking for their (the business) input and to consider participating on a subcommittee or in a special project; also for them to serve as a resource when their input is needed.

Mr. Sandberg voiced what he felt was expressed at the last meeting and that is the need for consistency in what is being put forth; consistent in the bullet points but not over reaching either.

Ms. von Aulock spoke of how fortunate the EEDC was to have Ms. Davis as a volunteer. She is the professional from the State and has agreed to accompany the different members of the Commission in the visits and will serve as a role model in how the meeting could/should go; this is where the consistency of the message will be developed and followed for future meetings.

As for a script of introduction, Ms. Hamel referred to the EEDC fact sheet distributed at the last meeting with the tenets taken from the Town Ordinances and what was developed at the Visioning Session.

A sample of a re-vised "leave behind" postcard was distributed by Ms. von Aulock; double sided with telephone numbers and email addresses of Town contact personnel on the back as suggested.

Mr. Benjamin asked if the phrases on the postcards were what were adopted by the Commission.

Discussion determined they were not the adopted slogans and Ms. von Aulock was willing to revise; was open to suggestions. Following discussion on an appropriate slogan, Ms. Hamel commented the Commission does not have a brochure and Ms. von Aulock has taken her time to prepare something to leave with the company.

Ms. MacDonald commented that what she was hearing from the work group today was different from what was discussed at the last meeting; at least that was her perception. And acknowledged she was the person who suggested the open business forum meeting be held initially. Today she was very comfortable with the meet and greet format as outlined to introduce the EEDC to the business community but that was not to say you could not pursue both endeavors.

As to what the Chamber is doing (for business outreach activities) Ms. Hamel offered the packet was prepared in conjunction with the Chamber and Chamber President Mike Schidlovsky who helped prepare the draft letter of introduction and expressed a willingness to go out on the business visits.

Mr. Eastman commented the subcommittee has worked very diligently and has been thoroughly scrutinized; need to move forward.

Mr. Dean added it is a huge step and will be very beneficial; just asked to be sure a feedback mechanism/brief notes are developed for future follow up if desired. He also added he sits on the Chamber's Board of Directors as an honorary member and to be mindful the EEDC is a new active group and a working relationship with the Chamber will develop as the group goes forward.

- **Discussion: proposed Business Forum collaboration**

Ms. MacDonald stated she and Mr. Sandberg were contacted by Ms. Field, also a member of the Chamber's Economic Development Committee, and asked if the EEDC would join their committee in participating in a business forum where three topics are to be highlighted; the EEDC, the train station/baggage building project and the Lincoln St. design charrette. They suggested the Commission focus on the ER Zone; perhaps with the power point developed by Ms. von Aulock and anything else they wished to present. Although all the details are not available at this time, Ms. MacDonald did

believe there were to be three forums set for Epping, Stratham and Exeter with the Exeter forum to be some morning in April; time, length of meeting, and format are to-be- determined. The Chamber will bring in their membership and solicit the businesses, but Ms. Field is asking for an EEDC member to be a part of the planning committee.

Ms. MacDonald felt the proposed business visits should still go forward but this was an opportunity to present the ER Zone and market the EEDC as an organization and at the same time work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

In further discussion, Ms. Davis commented you always accept invitations and always accept an opportunity to partnership/collaborate. Ms. Hamel added the joint forum had the support of the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee as one objective listed in their draft business outreach plan was for the EEDC to participate in a Chamber event and to also have business roundtable meetings with the Chamber.

As for the EEDC doing or preparing for participation in the train station project or the Lincoln St. design, Ms. Gilman clarified the details for those presentations are in place and require no EEDC responsibility in the preparation.

Mr. Sandberg did ask Ms. MacDonald to serve as the Commission representative and to meet with the Chamber committee to serve as the liaison to help represent the interest of the Commission: a role she agreed to accept.

Ms. Hamel inquired if funds were available for professionally printed materials to hand out at the forum; it was confirmed the 2012 budget did have monies. Discussion turned to the preparation of such materials and how to determine the immediate needs for this upcoming conference. The Chair asked Mr. Brown if working with Ms. MacDonald, Ms. Hamel and Mr. Stauber materials could be put together in the next few weeks to have for forum. He responded in the affirmative and will be at the top of his priority list. It was suggested the proposed design/material be shared electronically with the members or presented at the April meeting for review.

Ms. Hamel added once the letter is mailed to the thirty businesses and the follow up is made to schedule an appointment, the business visits will be by the members of the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee and possibly other Town representatives. If, however, a member wishes to call on a particular business to contact Ms. Hamel.

In summary, Mr. Sandberg affirmed it was the consensus of the Commission to move ahead on both items; the individual business meetings as well as participation in the Chamber forum. Ms. MacDonald is to be the liaison for the Chamber meeting; Ms. Hamel is chairing the efforts of her subcommittee for the individual business meetings. Mr. Brown will be working with the various work groups to help them move the activity plan along.

### **3. Town Updates/announcements**

Ms. von Aulock wished to comment on the Pawnbroker Ordinance being proposed by the Police Department and presented to the Board of Selectmen for their consideration. In reviewing the ordinance,

she found the language to be lengthy and questioned the effects placed onto the local consignment shops and the financial obligations required. She feels it overstates the concern and was looking for any update.

Mr. Dean provided a brief history of the proposed ordinance originating from the Police Department. It had a second reading at the March 6, 2012 meeting of the BOS and acknowledged it has generated a deal of comment as does any new ordinance dealing with regulation. He stated it is modeled after other Pawnbroker ordinances adopted in other NH communities. The issue of balance is important: what is good for the Police Department and their operation and what is best for the community. Legitimate questions have been raised on who qualifies and how and why and the Chief is looking at these concerns. One provision the department would like to have is the ability to track cash only transactions to aid in the recovery of stolen property.

When asked, Ms. Gilman acknowledge after the two readings they have received quite of bit of feedback from the public. They too have concerns on the amount of paperwork, fees but did want to note the information gained is not just for the benefit of the Exeter Police Department. There is a network in place with other police departments requesting and sharing information on stolen property gained through ordinances such as these. She felt there will be a great deal of editing before it comes back to the Board.

Mr. Stauber expressed his concerns over the details in the ordinance and the concerns he heard from the businesses. He understood there was to be an upcoming meeting with the Police Chief and the business owners on the ordinance, but that could not be confirmed. As an individual, he would like to have the EEDC take up the proposal and determine how it may or may not affect the businesses to comply with the regulations.

Mr. Dean stressed this is an ordinance that impacts Exeter residents not just the businesses in the community. Again, the need for balance; the decision has to be about whether it makes sense for the residents and businesses that are here.

With the proposed Pawnbroker ordinance on the Town website for viewing and feedback, the Chair asked if the Commission wished to take this up for discussion for a better understanding of the proposal; noting it is a regulatory ordinance and won't be changed by a discussion with the EEDC.

Mr. Clement and Ms. von Aulock both agreed learning of the impetus of the ordinance from Chief Kane would be beneficial. Ms. von Aulock added the length of the present proposal could use some serious editing resulting in something that works for the Town of Exeter and not full of "add ons" from other towns. Mr. Stauber also wished to know where the provisions outlined originated from.

Mr. Sandberg summarized the discussion with an offer to reach out to Chief Kane and if available make a brief presentation to the Commission at the April meeting. After such, the Commission can determine if they wished to become more involved or make a public statement on the ordinance. Asking for feedback, members indicated that was satisfactory. Selectmen Gilman and Clement volunteered the BOS is not ready to act on it anytime soon. The Chair agreed to follow up with Chief Kane and Mr. Dean.

Mr. Eastman spoke of a new ice cream/candy shop—Sugar and Ice 2-- opening at 85A Water St. at the site of the candy shop. Also, a coffee/pastry shop is set to occupy the former site of the Copper Canoe further on down Water St.

With the election of a new member to the BOS, there will most likely be some re-organization of committee assignments. Ms. Gilman was unsure who would be the representative to the EEDC but she would like to remain a member of the BR&E subcommittee. Continuing, she reported on a recent Heritage Committee meeting and the discussion on outreach opportunities. One idea was up-dating the walking tours originally prepared by the Historical Society and adding commentary to air on the access Channel 98. They will also be seeking grant opportunities for the Historical Society building; may be coming to EEDC for a letter of endorsement.

As a topic for a future meeting Mr. Dean thought it might be helpful for the EEDC to have an overview of the current commercial districts and how they function; to present an understanding of why we look the way we look. It was suggested perhaps Ms. von Aulock and Mr. Eastman could prepare such a program; is not to be an agenda item for the next meeting. Ms. Corson suggested the future presentation also address how to make changes and the process of. Also, the Selectmen will be scheduling a goal setting session for the Board in the coming weeks; if there are any themes you wish them to address/consider please advise them of such.

Ms. von Aulock spoke of COBHAM returning to the Planning Board for revisions in their parking plan as they proceed with the approved expansion plan. A business friendly approach is strived for in the Planning Department and as such they were able to accommodate their requests (for the revision) in a timely manner. It was suggested the BR&E group schedule a visit with the company sooner rather than later.

#### **4. Announcements**

Mr. Sandberg spoke of the provision of the EEDC by-laws calling for the election of the officers on an annual basis. Mr. Benjamin has agreed to coordinate the effort: is unsure if it will be a slate of officers for a single vote or the election for the individual positions. But there is the opening for the third position on the Executive Committee. The election will most likely occur in early May when most of the other Town Committees form their rosters for the coming year.

#### **5. Next meeting**

The April meeting is set for **April 10 at the start time of 8:00 am.**

#### **6. Adjournment**

With no further business the Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Corson so moved: seconded by Ms. Gilman.

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub  
Recording secretary