

**Exeter Economic Development Commission**

**April 10, 2012**

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:07 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Members present were: Len Benjamin, Brandon Stauber, Christine Davis, Kathy Corson, Lizabeth MacDonald, Selectwoman Julie Gilman, Madeleine Hamel, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Selectman Dan Chartrand, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Town Manager Russ Dean and Intern Jason Brown.

**2. Approval of minutes**

Ms. Corson moved to accept the draft minutes of March 20, 2012 as submitted; seconded by Ms. Gilman. With no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote for acceptance. Motion carried. (Mr. Benjamin, Ms. von Aulock, Mr. Eastman<sup>1</sup> and Sel. Chartrand were not present for the vote.)

**3. Welcome to Dan Chartrand, Board of Selectmen representative**

Sel. Gilman introduced newly elected Selectman Dan Chartrand. Mr. Chartrand is the owner of the Water Street Bookstore and most recently appointed as the Selectman representative to the EEDC. Ms. Gilman stated she will be working in tandem with Mr. Chartrand and wishes to remain active with the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee.

Mr. Sandberg welcomed Mr. Chartrand and provided a brief overview of the Commission and where it was presently. Members of the Commission introduced themselves and added a brief bio.

Also at this time, the Chair noted Jason Brown, intern for the EEDC, will be leaving this position on April 19, 2012 to accept a position with the State of Maine in Augusta. Mr. Sandberg wished him well and thanked him for his contributions in moving the EEDC's agenda along.

**4. Discussion/Action Items**

**Work Groups**

**• Update: proposed Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce Business Forum collaboration**

Ms. Corson announced the Chamber's Business Forum is set for April 25, 2012 to be held at The Rinks at Exeter, 40 Industrial Drive, from 7:30-9:00 am. It is a breakfast meeting with no charge to the attendees. Ms. MacDonald will be introducing the EEDC as an active Town Commission and Ms. von Aulock will be highlighting the ER Zone with a PowerPoint presentation. She will also be doing a visual presentation of the West Ex project as prepared by Plan NH with assistance with perhaps Ms. Gilman and Mr. Dean and speaking with Bob Hall of the Train Committee on the Train Station/Baggage building purchase.

Ms. Corson suggested contacting all the businesses located in the Epping Road corridor as this meeting is the forum the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee planned to schedule. When asked, Mr. Brown reaffirmed the mailing list for the businesses in the ER zone is complete; are looking for some additional contact names but mailing addresses are in the data base; there are 85 businesses located in the ER Zone. Ms. MacDonald suggested sharing the list with the Chamber to ensure those businesses are contacted. Ms. Corson also suggested a note be sent from the EEDC

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. von Aulock and Mr. Eastman are non-voting members of the Commission

notifying the businesses of the event. Discussion then focused on what form the communique would be; should be some discussion with the Chamber to ensure they are comfortable with the EEDC sending out a separate invite. Ms. Corson and Ms. MacDonald will follow up with the Chamber and the logistics of a mailing. Mr. Sandberg thanked Ms. Corson and Ms. MacDonald for their participation in what will be the first public outreach program for the EEDC; but was confident there would be more.

- **Update: Business Retention and Expansion -letter campaign**

Ms. Hamel confirmed the letter of introduction (sample letter circulated) was mailed the end of March to thirty businesses. At the subcommittee meeting on April 3, the recipient list was reviewed and a point person assigned to follow up with a phone call to schedule a visit with that business. Backup materials, reference information on the EEDC and its goals, the meeting notes form as circulated at a previous Commission meeting were also reviewed: cards and brochures being prepared by the Branding and Marketing work group. Contact calls have begun and to date, good responses are being received as appointments are scheduled.

Mr. Sandberg was pleased with the work and asked for any examples of what was the response of the businesses when contacted. Ms. Davis commented in one conversation with a local company she did need to confirm they (EEDC) were not soliciting funds or contributions for any project. Ms. Hamel added a company contacted was looking forward to their visit as they have space available in their building and will be giving them a tour of their facility.

Mr. Chartrand spoke to making connections in your mind as you talk with the businesses and learn more about their operations. You start being the connector with what one firm might do with/for the other; this will lead to economic development down the line.

Ms. Hamel added they will be encouraging the businesses to tap into the resources and links available at the State and local level and encouraging to buy local; creating an environment of supplier opportunities. And they will also be looking for support from the businesses and perhaps become involved and/or provide input to the Commission on future projects. Mr. Chartrand added the EEDC will not only be conveying information (in their visits) but will be pulling in information and will become a resource along with the other resources presented.

Mr. Dean added he too will be looking forward to outcome of the business visits to learn more what the Town can do as a municipality for the businesses: listen for cues as to what might be their needs and bring back to the group for discussion and possibly work into future CIP plans. Mr. Sandberg spoke again of keeping well documented notes so as to have a directory of firms visited, by whom, contact person seen. Ms. Hamel assured it was being done and is incorporated into an Excel program as a calendar (30.34)

As Mr. Sandberg was thanking Ms. Hamel and her group for their efforts, Ms. Hamel asked that Jason Brown be acknowledged for all his work in developing the business data base permitting them to put this venture together in a timely manner.

- **Update; Branding and Marketing -Materials for business forum**

Mr. Stauber started his report by circulating two different two-page documents prepared by his work group and noted they were prepared specifically for the business visits and the upcoming Chamber forum. He acknowledged Mr. Benjamin joining the subcommittee and assisting in the preparation along with Mr. Brown. The headliner and verbiage outlined is a compilation of the discussions held at the subcommittee meetings and at full Commission meetings. The thematic message chosen, **Open for Business Since 1638: The Crossroads of NH's Dynamic Seacoast Economy**, will be used throughout the development of future materials including the website. The format chosen is a ½ page document; size permits the message to stand out and allow for flexibility in developing future materials while maintaining a consistent size/format. It was emphasized it was not finalized and was open for discussion by the full Commission.

Mr. Stauber began his review with the card intended for the business visits; the leave behind card. The goals and objectives of the EEDC were listed on the front side as well as a specific email address created for the EEDC; [edc@town.exeter.nh.us](mailto:edc@town.exeter.nh.us). It is not a personal address but will be forwarded to the Chairman. (It was verified any inquiries on this active EDC email address presently go to Mr. Brown; will be changed before he departs. Mr. Sandberg stated he is willing to check the site and forward on to the appropriate contact if necessary). The reverse side of the card lists personnel contacts, meeting info and an invitation to join the EEDC.

The second card is being termed the “project highlight” that can be re-formatted for future presentations. This Chamber forum card lists basically the same information on the front side but on the reverse side provides more info on the ER Zone and contact/resources for additional information. For the Chamber event, it was also noted the two messages could be formatted into a single table top piece that could stand alone. Discussion continued with comments from members on formatting, content and graphics. As for the message on the reverse side re: ER Zone and Ms. Davis as a contact person at DRED, it was re-affirmed it was a DRED program and if she was willing to be listed as a contact that was acceptable but Ms. von Aulock will re-affirmed with Mr. Barry at DRED who might be the appropriate contact.. Ms. von Aulock went on to say the designation is now in place and it is the Commission’s role to educate the businesses and do the outreach program; this is where the Commission will be key. Mr. Sandberg agreed drawing on Mr. Chartrand’s comments, the EEDC will be the connector, the facilitator; must be sure the message goes forward.

Feeling the Commission was in basic agreement on the prepared materials, Mr. Sandberg felt the comments could be incorporated into a final card by the subcommittee in time for the April 25, 2012 meeting; Ms. von Aulock and Mr. Brown will confer. Ms. von Aulock will print the card in-house and the Town has a contractor for the larger table top format.

Ms. McDonald concluded confirming the logistics of the EEDC’s presence at the Forum; it was determined there will an adequate number of members present to staff the display table and greet attendees.

Mr. Dean returned to the bandstand/Town Hall image on the cards and put out the suggestion perhaps in a future series might feature local businesses; activities, signage or buildings. Ms. von Aulock added including “people” in the photos can reflect the friendliness of the business community; action of people

doing business. Mr. Stauber said the work group kept coming back to the historic component and the Bandstand; it is iconic but can be re-visited for future marketing materials.

(While on the subject of “historic”, Ms. Gilman put out a call for volunteers for the Town 375 Anniversary Committee.)

Mr. Stauber wished to use the remaining time for his presentation to raise several issues discussed at the work group meeting: the signage at Access Sports Medicine on the Exeter Road, Pawnbroker Ordinance and the Purchase and Sales Agreement by the YMCA for the former Junior High building on Linden St. The items were brought up as purely informational; no action required.

#### **4. Town Updates**

Mr. Dean spoke of the Business Showcase being held on April 11, 2012 at the Talbot Gym hosted by the SST students and the Chamber of Commerce from 3:00-7:00 pm. It is an annual event and is a PR for local businesses in conjunction with the Chamber. It was suggested the EEDC might want to be represented at a future time.

Ms. Hamel asked if members are going was it permissible to mingle as representatives of the EEDC. Mr. Sandberg felt most definitely and talk focused on the preparation of name tags/badges; limited time may preclude any action.

Vice-President Biden will be coming to Exeter and speaking at the Town Hall on Thursday, April 12, 2012. Background was given on the events leading up to Exeter being chosen for the visit and some of inconveniences that come with such a visit. But in actuality it is excellent PR for the Town as outside visitors and national media will be in attendance.

#### **5. General announcements**

Returning to the items raised by Mr. Stauber at the conclusion of his update, Mr. Sandberg inquired if there were other bodies or agencies looking at these issues.

Mr. Dean asked to comment on the topics. As for the P&S *with the YMCA*, the Town does not become involved until a set of plans come to the Planning Department for review. And the Pawnbroker Ordinance is being researched further; may be the need for a vote by the Town before such an ordinance can be enacted. The Access Sports Medicine signage is a complex issue with involvement by the DPW, Planning Department, Planning Board, Code Enforcement, Town Manager’s office and ultimately the Board of Selectmen that have jurisdiction over Public Right of Ways; it was cautioned to not become involved without a full understanding of the details.

Ms. MacDonald acknowledged Mr. Stauber’s wish to educate the group on the topics, but suggested they (any future topics/issues) be submitted to Chairman for possible inclusion on an agenda; only if it is something the EEDC is prepared to start working on.

Ms. Hamel spoke of Reminisce; a new business opening on Water Street next to Whirlygig’s featuring home décor items and art work by local artists.

Ms. von Aulock spoke of an upcoming presentation to ZORC on Form Based Codes by Julie LaBranche from the Rockingham Planning Commission on Seabrook's action on Route 1. A ZORC subcommittee is focusing on implementing the FBC for the Portsmouth Avenue corridor.

**6. Next Meeting**

**May 8, 2012** and **June 12, 2012** were set as meeting dates for the next two months; **start time 8:00 am**

On the May agenda will be a vote on a slate of officers. Mr. Sandberg agreed to be considered for the role of Chairman for the coming year and Ms. MacDonald is willing to continue as Vice-Chair; the third position on the Executive Committee is open. Mr. Lortie agreed to remain as Treasurer: that is not an elective position. If any members are interested in running for any of the three positions on the Executive Committee, please contact Mr. Benjamin.

**7. Adjournment**

With no further business the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Benjamin so moved: seconded by Ms. MacDonald. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub  
Recording Secretary