

Exeter Economic Development Commission

May 08, 2012

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Approval of minutes: April 10, 2012 meeting

Referencing members listed as *not present* for the vote on the draft minutes, Mr. Dean clarified the status of Ms. von Aulock and Mr. Eastman as non-voting staff members. He also suggested the acronym *P&S* be modified and *with the YMCA* be added for clarification (in referencing the Squamscott Commons real estate sale). Mr. Benjamin moved to accept the minutes with the edits noted; seconded by Ms. Corson. Motion carried. Mr. Lortie abstained as he was not present for the meeting. (Mr. Chartrand was not present for vote)

3. Discussion/Action Items

Work groups:

- **Report: participation in Exeter Area Chamber Business Forum**

Ms. MacDonald stated the Breakfast Forum was very well attended with approximately 50-60 people in attendance. It appeared to be a broad representation in the different business people there; definitely showed economic development is of interest to the business community. Ms. Corson and Ms. Hamel manned the EEDC table with materials prepared by Jason Brown before his departure and Ms. von Aulock. Ms. Corson added the presentations by Ms. MacDonald and Ms. von Aulock were very well done.

Mr. Lortie felt the DRED representative could have provided more specific examples on how the tax credits are applied in the ER Zone. After some discussion, it was agreed Mr. Lortie will be in contact with Mr. Barry at DRED for specifics and a follow up letter with those details will go out to the businesses in attendance using the names and addresses from the data base..

Because of a miscommunication between the host and caterer, the Chamber ultimately supplied the refreshments. Ms. Corson felt because the presentation focused primarily on the EEDC and their presentation, perhaps the EEDC could assist in the related costs. Ms. MacDonald will follow up with the Chamber.

Also noted, the Chamber will host a second Breakfast Forum at the Stratham Municipal Center on Wednesday, May 30, 2012. The agenda will be the Gateway Commercial Business District Master Plan, Form Based Code, Water/Sewer infrastructure improvements and the Plan NH Town Center Design Charrette. The portion dedicated to infrastructure improvements will address items of importance to Exeter.

The Chairman thanked all for their hard work and reflected it appeared to be a good turnout, with good feedback and good visibility (for the EEDC).

- **Report: Business Retention and Expansion letter campaign/business meetings scheduled**

Ms. Hamel reported the business outreach program is continuing. To date, members of the work group together with Mr. Dean have met with ten (10) businesses. The responses are positive and seemed pleased to meet representatives of the EEDC and to see the Town has an interest in their presence. Appreciation was also expressed on learning about the EEDC and more of the available assistance from the office at DRED.

The work group is enjoying their visits as they are learning more of the businesses in the community. There is a free exchange in the conversations while providing feedback on their experience of doing business in Exeter. Ms. Hamel commented on the broad spectrum of topics discussed at the meetings.

The subcommittee will be meeting soon to review their notes and information and determine how best to collate the information and provide a full report to the Commission at the June meeting.

Ms. von Aulock commented there are opportunities for “happenings” within the Town’s zoning ordinances; suggested group make a list of those amenities the employers would like to see happen; she and Mr. Eastman could review and determine if a possibility. Mr. Eastman later commented on the coffee shop located in the Nike Bauer building at 100 Domain Drive: an accessory use permitted within the ordinance.

Ms. Hamel added thank you notes are sent by the EEDC visitors following a meeting. If something specific was requested/questioned during the visit the appropriate contact person within the Town or State is listed for follow up.

Ms. Corson did wish to add how fortunate the Commission was to have Ms. Davis go out with them on the visits; she brings a wealth of knowledge of the resources the State offers that many of the businesses are not aware of; cited an example with Prescott Well and Pump.

Mr. Sandberg commented one of the missions adopted by the EEDC is to be a connector and a Facilitator in the Town and it appears it (EEDC) is already starting to take on that role.

- **Report: Branding and work group Materials in development/web site**

Mr. Stauber, chairman of the work group stated they had not met since the last meeting but are preparing to contact Selectmen Ferraro and Clement to determine where the Town is in the revised web site design process as they proceed to develop further the EEDC web material. They are looking forward to the forthcoming Business Retention and Expansion report to provide additional support as to the needs/profiles to be addressed in the web site development.

Mr. Dean weighed on the status of the selection process for the redesign. At this time it is down to two vendors; both have municipal website experience. User names and passwords were issued to volunteers within the departments to determine the ease in editing/updating the site. Ultimately, each department will be responsible for the editing and content management for their section of the site. When the selection is made, the EEDC will then become involved in the design process.

The Chair inquired as to what exactly what marketing materials/handouts were available. Two of the cards distributed at Breakfast Forum were circulated among the members. The goals of the Commission are stated on the front side and the reverse side may be customized for a specific message; in this instance the ER Zone. All commented on the professional look of the material and that it was an excellent start. Mr. Sandberg summarized: we know what materials we have and will develop as needed or when the opportunity arises i.e. web site.

- **Action plan:** EEDC and Master Plan.

Mr. Sandberg commented from the Visioning Session one item listed as an action plan for 2012 is to work with the Planning Board on developing an Economic Development chapter for the Town's Master Plan. At this time there is no one chapter that speaks to Economic Development although referenced in other sections of the Plan. It is not something needed to be undertaken at this time but wanted to start the dialogue; what is the process, the time frame.

Ms. Corson replied from her experience it is a huge undertaking (writing a specific chapter for the Master Plan) requiring time and manpower; at this time she does not feel it is possible to bring together the number of people needed to commit to the task. Right now the PB and ZORC are working on a major project formulating- with the intent of adoption- Form Based Codes. If the Commission wishes to move forward with this initiative it might consider bringing in a consultant to facilitate the project.

Ms. von Aulock echoed Ms. Corson's statements. Presently, her schedule does not permit assistance from her department in such an undertaking. She expressed caution in members spreading themselves too thinly considering the current projects underway; suggested it be perhaps a 2013 action.

Mr. Dean added the process (of developing an Economic Chapter) is important; cautioned it not be fashioned by a self-interest group. The idea of the services of a qualified outside consultant seems reasonable and outside input be solicited to have the final document be representative of the Town.

Mr. Sandberg commented the document was listed as an action plan under the Organization and Capacity Development subcommittee and suggested sending it along to Chairman Lortie and his work group for discussion, review and come back to the full Commission with possible recommendations and a perhaps a time frame.

Mr. Chartrand added additional comments: the suggestion of Mr. Stauber to take a neighboring community's outline of their Economic Development chapter for use as a template was a good one at this time but agreed with Mr. Dean, it must be a grass roots, organic-process driven document. He also expressed an interest in serving on this subcommittee.

Before leaving the topic, Ms. von Aulock summarized the process previously employed in creating the Master plan and the number of participants. Because it is a responsibility of the

Planning Board she suggested a member of the PB be a member of the subcommittee. Mr. Dean added with the lapse in time since it was originally crafted and with the advances in technology over the years, a re- review of the process is warranted.

4. Presentation 2012 Slate of Officers

Mr. Benjamin announced the following members willing to serve as the EEDC Officers for the 2012-2013 year. The terms are for one year: will revisit May 2013

Chairman: Barry Sandberg Vice Chair: Beth MacDonald Secretary: Kathy Corson
Brian Lortie will remain as Treasurer (a non-elective position)

Mr. Stauber moved to accept the Slate of Officers as presented; seconded by Mr. Chartrand. Vote:
unanimous

5. Town Updates/announcements

Mr. Chartrand spoke of the Board of Selectmen's first goal setting session held in April with the Selectmen starting to develop a list of goals. The intent is to move out of the minutiae and look at the long term; intent to deliver the highest quality of life at the most efficient cost. The second session is set for May 18, 2012. He will be prepared to deliver a more detailed report to the group at the June meeting.

Mr. Dean commented more on the Exeter/Stratham water/sewer talks. Presently the consultant, Kleinfelder S E A, is analyzing the question whether it makes sense for each town to work independently or collaborate in some form of partnership. Sel. Clement is representing the BOS and noted the level of logistics involved; not simplistic. Also involved is a cost analysis; capital costs and operating costs. It is an objective process and a final report will be produced for distribution but unsure when that might occur.

Ms. Gilman spoke of the Winter Street Cemetery being listed to the NH Register of Historic Places; ties in to EEDC marketing message of Historic Exeter. Also, the Historic District Commission (HDC) has a grant out for a survey of the High Street Historic District; will be used as a tool for HDC in identifying styles and contributing factors of the architecture for that District but applicable to the other two Town historic districts. As a Certified Local Government, Exeter qualifies for the grant administered by the State Division of Historic Resources.

The Train Committee continues to work toward the purchase of the baggage building. The paper work associated with the DOT grant is very time consuming: is impacting much of Ms. von Aulock's time.

She also added the solar photovoltaic array at the DPW on Newfields Rd. will be going on line this month. The Energy Committee and the contractor will be holding a press conference with invited guests

Mr. Stauber spoke to his involvement with the ABI Innovation Hub of Manchester, NH. Presently it focuses on small business start-ups in Manchester area; would like to see group expand into Seacoast. He is willing to provide an update at the June meeting.

6. Next meeting June 12, 2012 with start time of 8:00 am

- 7. Motion to adjourn** made by Ms. Gilman; seconded by Mr. Benjamin. Meeting adjourned at 9:35am.
Respectfully submitted,
Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary