

Here are the meeting notes from the Monday, March 28, 2011 meeting at the Chamber of Commerce offices.

Attendance at the meeting: Bob, Arthur, Mike S, Bill, Julie, Peter, Cary, Don B.

Agenda:

- Downeaster update and performance stats
- NNEPRA & Trainriders NE update
- Station Project approval - next steps
- Spring clean up at the station
- Next meeting

### **Downeaster Performance & Station Condition**

Bob reported that the Exeter boardings continue to be strong, coming back from some decline in December/January due to the hard winter. Bob observes that the parking lot is full most days.

Bob also reported that there will be a Downeaster schedule change commencing on April 18; the late evening train from Boston (689) will depart at 11:20 pm vs. the present 11:00 pm departure. Also the Old Orchard stop will be added for the summer/fall.

Bob reported that the NH Garden Club has provided a \$150 grant to purchase and install hanging baskets at the station. Don B. inquired about the possibility of encouraging and receiving donations to the station for support items and maintenance. There was a brief discussion about setting up an account for funds. Bob will contact Russ Dean to arrange for such an account.

Bob mentioned that the national Train Day will be held on May 7th. There are no special events planned for Exeter although there is a possibility that Amtrak may run a special train through town; date/time TBD. But as a heads up, Bob noted that the committee should plan on having events for the Downeaster 10th anniversary which will be held in December.

After a brief discussion, the committee agreed to hold a station clean up session on Saturday, April 30 at 8:00 am.

Bob also noted that the station needs painting and that some of the column bases require repairs. The committee then discussed recurring vandalism at the station and adjacent buildings (graffiti spray painting). Bob reported that he had contacted the police about the problem. There was a brief discussion about the merits of having the Exeter Newsletter address the issue.

### **Station Project and Improvements:**

There was a general discussion about the results of the town vote approving the station improvement project. The voters approved the project with 1022 votes for vs. 657 votes against. There followed a general acknowledgment of the good team work within the committee and the supportive help from town officials that led to the successful outcome.

Don reported that there would be a meeting on Tuesday, 3/29, at the town offices of people who have been involved in the planning of the station and the West Ex initiative to discuss next steps. It is an open meeting.

### **Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and Trainriders NE Update**

The bi-monthly NNEPRA operations meeting will be held in Exeter on April 14 at the Hampton Inn. The station committee is hosting the meeting and all are invited to the meeting starting at 9:30 am. Thanks to the Chamber office for coordinating the meeting. Cary has offered to arrange for a second bus from PEA. Don B. will prepare a Power Point presentation addressing the station project with a overview of the West Ex Plan NH presentation.

Bob reported that the federal high-speed rail funds rejected by Florida will be redistributed and that Massachusetts is requesting \$110M for replacement of the Haverhill bridge. Bob also reported on the three options that NNEPRA is considering for a new passenger station in Portland; at the present site, on St John's Street and near the former cruise terminal site.

**Next Meeting:** 5 pm, Monday, April 25th, 2011, at the Chamber offices.

CC: Arthur