

Exeter Economic Development Commission

June 11, 2013

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:08 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Members present were: Selectman Dan Chartrand, Brian Lortie, Kathy Corson, Brandon Stauber, Elizabeth MacDonald, Madeleine Hamel, Jason Proulx, David Hampson and Town Manager Russ Dean. Also in attendance: Building Inspector Doug Eastman and intern Derek Scanlon

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Chartrand moved to accept the minutes of the May 11, 2013 EEDC meeting; seconded by Ms. MacDonald. Motion passed with Mr. Hampson abstaining. (Mr. Proulx and Ms. Hamel were not present for the vote.)

3. Town Updates/announcements

Mr. Sandberg referenced the quarterly financial report circulated electronically by the Treasurer, Mr. Lortie, to the members prior to this meeting.

The Chair then asked to deviate from agenda to address some concerns brought to his attention via a telephone conversation with a member. He asked Mr. Stauber to address the Commission on the issues expressed to him and then open it to the Commission and how they wished to respond.

Mr. Stauber expressed two concerns; the prepared slate of officers as listed on the agenda and the process used to prepare the slate and the lack of action on a motion passed at a previous meeting not being enacted upon. These concerns were examples he felt were emblematic of the Commission not going forward with its mission.

In years past, an individual or a small group approached each member of the Commission for their interest in serving on the Executive committee. This did not happen this year and appeared it was prepared by Executive Committee which to his knowledge has never met formally in the past two and a half years; feels it was not vetted in an appropriate manner.

Moving on to a motion passed in January for the formation of a Development Committee to focus on development issues: zoning, studying the establishment of a TIF. Although not part of an agenda for the ensuing months, discussion offered a scenario where the motion (goals of) was not ignored but evolved into the current subcommittee working on a TIF analysis/ presentation as requested by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Chartrand agreed with the slate of officers not being vetted in transparent fashion. He also made some observations on the actions of Mr. Stauber in and outside the Commission. Responding to the comments expressed Mr. Stauber cited his background and professional experience and his genuine interest in seeing the community retain its flavor and integrity consistent with the values of the community/region. If his desire to see a proposal address what he feels are valid points comes across as negative that is not his intent.

4. Vote: Slate of Officers for 2013-2014

As for the slate of officers to serve for the remaining 2013 year as listed on the agenda, Mr. Sandberg did take responsibility for preparing the slate. After speaking with Mr. Benjamin, who was the nominating committee of one last year, Mr. Benjamin did not feel it was necessary to poll the individual members this year to prepare the

slate. The Chair contacted each of the present officers who all agreed to continue in their respective position. The slate was offered with the notation that nominations be open for other individuals of the Commission. Before asking for a motion to approve, the Chair noted Mr. Stauber was willing to serve and asked if there were any nominations from the floor.

With no nominations forthcoming, Mr. Chartrand moved to approve the slate of officers as presented; seconded by Ms. Tokos. In discussion on the motion, Ms. MacDonald asked Mr. Stauber if he wished to be nominated. Mr. Stauber re-iterated he would not self-nominate but is willing to serve if so nominated.

Responding to a question by Ms. Hamel on if there is a scheduled meeting time for Executive Committee, Mr. Sandberg noted that most often the officers conferred electronically; will be reviewed.

With no further discussion, the Chairman called for a motion to approve slate of officers as presented;

Barry Sandberg, Chairman Beth MacDonald, Vice Chair Kathy Corson, Clerk Brian Lortie, Treasurer

Motion carried with all present voting in affirmation; Mr. Stauber abstained

5. Report from TIF sub committee

Mr. Chartrand, subcommittee chairman, had no formal report but noted the group gave a TIF presentation to the Planning Board following the May EEDC meeting. Beneficial feedback was received from the members present along with comments on the “cons” to be explored and addressed in the ongoing study. Ms. MacDonald asked if any members had a “con” to please email her with the concern/topic so it may be investigated and discussed by the subcommittee.

Mr. Hampson felt the material distributed electronically to the subcommittee on TIF material from the Wiki website (referencing some failed examples) was valuable as it needs to be considered and understood as it will come up at future public meetings. Mr. Dean cautioned every state is different and how the concept is utilized by each state. A “con” example is great to have and understand; then how does it apply to the plan being considered for the Town.

Mr. Chartrand commented there are more examples of successes in NH towns when the program is administered properly; it is a way of doing business in NH towns. Agreed, you should be on the lookout for the things that could be difficult about the TIF program/concept. Again, he stressed it is a vehicle to direct funds to an aging infrastructure in our downtown; our downtown being one of our chief assets in economic development.

Ms. Tokos was also at the PB presentation and came away realizing there will be the need to be clear and plain spoken when presenting the plan. There are perceived complications (of a TIF) that need to be understood and addressed and if possible show positive examples and perhaps negative examples.

Responding to a suggestion for working group to include specific financial info, Mr. Dean added members of the Town staff are working on such numbers and will only be available when all can see and review. Also, the dollars approved at the May meeting for a consultant-review will re-look and comment on the prepared draft as it develops into a final report.

Mr. Chartrand added it might be late summer/early fall before the report is presented to the Board of Selectmen. The next step is to try to generate some citizen input and continue to develop draft.

6. Discussion: RSA 79-E

Working from a prepared handout, Mr. Dean prefaced the discussion on RSA 79-E, Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive as another tool in the tool box (for economic development). The handout was from Goffstown, a town similar in population to Exeter, and prepared by the NH Preservation Alliance and NH Main Street Center. Basically, the statute needs to be adopted by a town (by a warrant article) before an applicant can take advantage of its provisions. Its goals are to encourage the rehabilitation and active use of under-utilized buildings and in doing so may promote local economic development. An applicant may apply to the BOS for a period of temporary tax relief when wishing to redevelop a property. The tax relief would be for a finite period of time; during this time the property tax would not increase as a result of the substantial rehabilitation. Following the expiration of the tax relief period, the structure would be taxed at its full market value taking into account the rehabilitation.

Mr. Hampson asked how it would work in conjunction with a TIF; and could it be counteractive in what you are trying to achieve with a TIF. Ms. Tokos asked if other communities with TIF districts had 79-E available. Because Mr. Dean was just beginning to study the RSA in depth, he was not able to completely answer the questions, but in some way TIF development might be able to take advantage of 79-E as well; may hasten the initiation of a project.

Mr. Dean anticipates presenting this to the BOS for their consideration and felt it would be beneficial to have a letter of support from the EEDC before it goes to the Board.

Looking ahead to public meetings on warrant articles and the potential for confusion, Ms. Corson questioned if this should be integrated into the TIF working group (for study) so as to present the TIF and the adoption of the two together as economic development tools; with the explanation of each and possible synergy of the two.

The Chairman noted it appears they can go together but each can go on its own. Asked how the Commission wished to proceed: have the TIF subcommittee incorporate this into their study or to receive a more detailed report/discussion at the July meeting

Mr. Chartrand suggested following Mr. Dean's suggestion the EEDC as a Commission received a more detailed report at the July meeting and consider a letter of support to submit to the BOS; appears to be more straightforward and not as involved as establishing a TIF district. Chair stated it will be on the July agenda.

7. Review

- **April 2nd Vision meeting; 2013 EEDC priorities**

Following the Visioning meeting, the Chair and Vice Chair working with the facilitator, Mr. Sinnott, tabulated the results from the meeting. Working from a prepared Excel worksheet Mr. Sandberg reviewed the topics discussed at the session.

The top priorities coming from the meeting:

- Develop and support fundamentals of EEDC

Minutes approved at July 9, 2013 EEDC meeting

- Ensuing Exeter's growth
- Provide for a sustainable EEDC
- Developing relationships
- Develop and maintain tools to assist EEDC

The question posed by the Chairman is what does the Commission wish to do with the information garnered; where does it go next, what goals?

Mr. Stauber asked if the position of an Economic Director was discussed at the BOS at a recent Goal Setting session; if so that may change the structure/function of the goals.

Mr. Chartrand acknowledged it was discussed but as a concept and will review the different models that might make sense for Exeter; would need to be in synergy with the EEDC. Before going to the Budget Committee for consideration would want input from EEDC. But he did add, the BOS is impressed with the energies and actions coming from EEDC and that is one reason why this position rose to one of their three short term goals.

Returning to the grid, Mr. Sandberg reviewed the tasks listed under the five stated priorities. It was evident there is the need for the current standing committees to continue but are opportunities for the newer members. One task emerged as a goal was involvement in an Economic Development component for the Town Master Plan which was an opportunity for leadership.

Mr. Proulx expressed an interest in priority 5: developing and maintain tools to assist EEDC. At a subcommittee meeting the formation of a 501-C discussed and had the EEDC done so. Mr. Dean felt the EEDC was both a 501-C and a 501-C3 and each has its own issues. Mr. Stauber stated he and Mr. Proulx were investigating a Salesforce software program with 10 free licenses for non-profits that would allow better tracking of the EEDC's interaction with the Town businesses on the present business data base spreadsheet. Mr. Proulx felt utilizing such a system would be a valuable tool for accessing and maintain the data base as he finds the present Excel program to be cumbersome to access and maintain. Ms. Hamel stated Derek attended the meeting and is attempting to corral the various entries individually made to the database. (Mr. Dean then introduced intern Derek Scanlon seated at the back of the room and suggested the members use him as a resource.)

8. Next Meeting: July 9, 2013

- The Chair, with the assistance of Mr. Dean and the Executive Committee, will follow up on the non-profit status and continue with the discussion on maintaining the business data base at July meeting.
- The priorities will be reviewed and will reach out to members to seek individuals willing to take on leadership roles and report back to group.
- Further discussion on RSA 79-E and possible recommendation for BOS
- Updates on work groups: Ms. Hamel will prepare a report of her work group's second round of their Business Community Outreach project.

9. General announcements

Mr. Dean reported at the BOS Goal Setting session an All-Boards meeting was planned for late summer/early fall to convene the various Town departments, committees, commissions to brain storm, receive feedback on various Town issues i.e. land-use, housing, commercial tax base, economic development.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Chartrand motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Lortie. Meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary