

The Town of Exeter, New Hampshire  
All Boards Meeting  
September 24, 2013  
6:00pm  
Exeter Public Library

Attendance by Boards/Commissions: Don Clement, Cliff Sinnott, Ginny Raub, Lang Plumer, Kathy Corson, John Merkle, Len Benjamin, Brandon Stauber, Bob Prior, Katherine Woolhouse, Christina Hardy, Barry Sandberg, Madeleine Hamel, Pete Cameron, Frank Ferraro, Mary Dupre, Dan Chartrand, Beth MacDonald, Ken Knowles, Martha Pennell, Pete Richardson, Julie Gilman, Matt Quandt, Sylvia Von Aulock, Rick Thielbar, John Hauschildt.

Others in attendance: Russ Dean, Town Manager; Barbara McEvoy, State Rep. Frank Heffron; Chamber of Commerce President Michael Schidlovsky and residents Joe Berwanger, Eric Savage, Gerry Hamel, Brian Griset, Karen Davies, Faith Flythe, Lori Whitney, Building Inspector Douglas Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia Von Aulock, Bill Campbell, Exeter News Letter reporter Jeff McMenemy, Scott Carlisle, Amy Johnson and Stratham resident Tom House.

1. Welcome & Introductions: Don Clement, Chair, Board of Selectman, called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. He provided an overview and the guidelines for the meeting.
2. Background for All-Boards Meeting: Mr. Clement introduced Town Manager Russ Dean, who shared that approximately two years ago a discussion was had at a Board of Selectmen goals meeting on what the Town of Exeter would look like in the future. How do we balance residential housing, commercial and industrial growth? Thus the idea for this meeting including engaging the various town boards on the issues was born out of that discussion.
3. Regional Perspective and Observations: Mr. Clement introduced the evening's facilitator, Cliff Sinnott, of the Rockingham County Planning Commission to begin the evening's discussion. Mr. Sinnott outlined that the meeting will be done in 3 rounds of 30 minutes each and asked everyone to keep comments to about one minute per person.

Mr. Sinnott provided his observations about this evening: this type of meeting is unique for the town and a terrific idea to be proactive to hear broader perspectives on how to look at town growth, what type of growth and how to manage this growth.

4. Discussion Round 1: Discussion question: *"Where do we want to be as a Town, especially with respect to future development, and what are the means to get there?"*

Thoughts and ideas:

- We have affordable housing, good commercial & industry
- Stay competitive
- Possibility to develop areas for zoning

- Zoning application long & awkward
- Embrace historic heritage-make Exeter a destination; maximize our strengths
- Maintain balance with history, housing, commercial & industry
- Large-sized land for development, more demand for housing makes more land available for residential growth
- Attract more industry
- Town needs balance
- Increase commercial base
- Reaching out to business community to help them flourish and build partnerships with this business community
- Ability to walk around town; repair and install sidewalks
- Develop Lincoln Street & Portsmouth Ave.
- Maintain integrity and diversity of our community
- Maintain green & open spaces
- Concern around water & sewer systems, water treatment & how infrastructure effects these
- Communication between departments and boards
- Public transportation “how to get from here to there” (Boston, Portsmouth, around town)
- Parking
- Work on encouraging straight market housing rates
- Don’t discourage conventional opportunities
- Find a way to have a responsible residential tax base
- Be careful about the effects of zoning changes
- ZORC moves things along in Town
- Keep quaintness & identity, don’t change quality of life
- Increase All-Boards interaction for better and continued communications
- Integrate Town Departments into process (i.e.: DPW, Fire Department, etc.)
- Good schools
- Encourage high tech, bio tech, grow health industry, health sciences
- Embrace economic initiatives
- Town has central location
- Tap into our strengths
- Economic development vs. redevelopment-not leveraging all our assets
- Cost of taxing-fine tuning tax base for commercial and industrial expansion
- Spend more time on downtown revitalization, use as an urban space
- Balance wetlands & development
- What is our timeframe?
- Need to be poised to be ahead of the curve
- Incentives for growth

- Business retention
- Include developers on committees, make them partners not adversaries
- Cross pollination of representatives from Boards/Commissions/Town Departments
- Are we reactive vs. proactive

5. Discussion Round 2: “What specific actions and strategies should be taken to move us toward our shared goals?”

Thoughts and ideas:

- Each board has own charter/rules, one size doesn't fit all. Audit our policies?
- Use downtown more densely, downtown over managed from regulatory perspective
- Where will development happen & policies?
- Hire Economic Development Director
- Define difference between economic development and re-development
- TIF and 79E
- Zoning has impact on growth
- What is our philosophy on investment for growth
- Integrate groups
- Attitude towards growth
- Aggressive approach on development
- Initiatives for greater economic development
- Business community involved in development process
- Town to embrace historical assets to make economically viable
- Continue this type of meeting
- Talking with town departments so all on same page when comes to approving/not approving applications (i.e. Planning Board, Zoning Board)
- Better envisioning our future
- Consider suspending zoning rules for downtown
- Consider form based code for downtown
- Minimize regulations
- Embrace local agriculture
- Epping Rd green because no municipal services are available out there
- Need to move ideas forward from 'tickler' file
- This meeting is empowering
- Add Economic Development chapter to Town Plan
- Process our philosophy & guidelines on growth
- Create a Rapid Response Team to deal with business retention
- Read master plan, zoning ordinances
- Good communication; increase communication
- Look at business performance zones
- Review Planning Board waivers

Due to time restraints discussion round 3 - "What specific actions and strategies should be with respect to specific area of Town?" was tabled. At this time meeting was opened up to the public who were in attendance. The following is their input:

- Why are people and businesses not coming to Exeter? Are regulations tying hands? Do these regulations need to be more lenient?
- Exeter is different. Don't sell us out-maintain character of town
- Rte. 125 has higher auto traffic; traffic count counts; don't expect Epping Rd. to become Portsmouth Ave.
- No commitment to land on either side of Rte. 101, which has the highest traffic count. Let's re-visit. Towns compete and we need to be competitive
- Zoning to be flexible in residential development

With no other public input, Mr. Clement asked group if this venue worked. Answer-yes. We need to meet again to complete agenda item 6 and the group decided end of October but no date set.

Mr. Clement adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Herndon

Recording Secretary