

1. Call meeting to order

Chairman Barry Sandberg called the meeting to order at 8:05 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office building. Members present were: Kathy Corson, Brian Lortie, Len Benjamin, Cynthia Tokos, Dave Hampson, Jason Proulx, 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 intern Mark Manganiello.

Mr. Sandberg reported Mr. Kevin King was unable to attend the meeting for the scheduled presentation to the Commission; hopes to re-schedule at a later time as his schedule permits.

2. Approval of minutes of September 10, 2013 meeting

Mr. Dean noted a typo/misused word in minutes. Mr. Chartrand then moved to accept the draft minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Benjamin. Motion carried. (Mr. Proulx was not present for the vote)

3. Town updates/announcement

• **Town Manager's report**

Mr. Dean distributed copies of the job description for an Economic Developer as approved at the October 7, 2013 Board of Selectmen's meeting; basically the same as the drafts seen by the EEDC with some refinements. It is being forwarded onto the Budget Recommendation Committee for their review: will be meeting with Chairman of BRC to discuss how it will be presented. As to when the staff position might be on board, Mr. Dean replied only after approval at March meeting would the position start to be advertised. If all goes well in candidates' review, probably middle of June/first of July.

Copies of the notes prepared by Mr. Cliff Sinnott, the facilitator at the All Boards meeting held September 24, 2013, were distributed. Mr. Dean felt it was a very interesting meeting; most likely there will be a follow up meeting as time did not permit the third item on agenda to be addressed.

Commenting on the meeting, he felt there were two major areas of emphasis; opportunity for land use boards and the inter-boards to talk about issues of importance to them and also the emphasis for the development of strategies to move forward to enhance the commercial (tax) base.

The Chair thanked the members of the EEDC for attending; felt it was a great meeting and the Commission was well represented. Mr. Chartrand concurred; for him the concept of taking a "balanced" approach to land use issues, preserving, as well as working to further develop (economically) was a dominant theme.

Ms. Hamel commented on the energy and interest of the community as well as the land use board members in the sharing of different perspectives. She felt there was a great amount of interest in the EEDC and what the function and action of the Commission was all about; need more opportunities to highlight, to promote and educate the mission of group.

The work on a 12-month calendar of events continues with Mr. Dean and Mr. Manganiello compiling the upcoming economic related functions/events.

The TIF subcommittee will be meeting with Mr. Donald Jutton of Municipal Resources, Inc. from Meredith, NH on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 8:30 am. As the consultant retained with the two thousand dollars approved at the May EEDC meeting, Mr. Jutton will be reviewing and commenting on the subcommittee's draft proposal for TIF district. The Chair noted the members representing the EEDC are Mr. Hampson, Ms. Tokos and Ms. MacDonald. (Ms. Corson also a member of the subcommittee is the representative from Planning Board)

An invite was extended to Karen Pollard, Economic Development Manager for Rochester NH, to address the EEDC; she has agreed when schedules permit. Rochester has both RSA79-E and a TIF district.

- **RSA 79-E (second presentation)**

Responding to questions raised at the September meeting on the interaction of a TIF district and a 79-E within the same community, Mr. Manganiello started the presentation with a review of the application process and the checks and balances in granting a property owner a certain number of years of tax relief while re-habilitating his property in a designated district.

In an effort to define the districts, it is proposed to have 11 districts; 2 districts would be included in the proposed TIF district. The proposed zones were outlined and the 2 districts with overlap noted.

Although a number of communities have a TIF district or a 79-E district only the Towns of Newmarket, Peterborough and Franklin were found to have both with district overlaps. They found no negative effects with the overlaps of districts. mainly because of timing. Where there was overlap, the TIF was not active at the same time when tax relief was being granted. If the governing board felt there would be an adverse effect on the TIF district the RSA does permit the application be denied.

It was acknowledged there are many scenarios involving the time line of a project(s). A visual representation was displayed of a possible example and fiscal analysis with and without 79-E; could be tax incentives do not influence investment and project would still go forward. Another scenario of tax incentives creating investment was displayed.

Mr. Dean restated this is just another tool in the Town's tool box and may make (Exeter) competitive if another community also has this RSA; can be advantageous. Mr. Sandberg also reminded, if adopted, each application will be reviewed individually. Also, the Planning Office would most likely be involved in the project but the final decision to grant any tax relief is with the BOS. And, it (79-E) can also be a negotiating/leverage tool between developer and Town i.e. size of project tied to granting the length of tax relief; could result in a more ambitious or diversified project with these tools.

Continued discussion and questions on the application process, responsibility for overview of proposed project and determining value at the end of tax relief period. It was determined if a building is demolished and the new structure is confined to the existing footprint it may be eligible for 79-E. As to negatives from the participating towns, Mr. Manganiello cited a few instances but wasn't familiar with all the details

Minutes approved at 11.12.13 meeting with correction

A rough draft of the warrant article was shown outlining the RSA 79-E proposal and listing the 11 districts. Mr. Manganiello reviewed the inventory of existing structures in each of the districts.

Mr. Clement was recognized and commented on the quality of the presentation and asked if copies could be provided to the BOS. As to the language of the draft article and listing 11 districts, he asked that the Board and possibly other Board members review the draft and have the option to perhaps reduce or alter the number of districts; if does go on ballot for vote, 11 districts might be troublesome.

Mr. Dean added if BOS approves article to be a warrant article that in itself will carry some weight; voter education/explanation will be provided.

Ms. von Aulock weighed in with her difficulty in interpreting the RSA's town center language extending into the some of the named 11 districts and she understood the intent of developing long range development. Questioned whether Town Counsel might want to review and who determines "public benefit" as stated in RSA.

Mr. Dean read the criteria as deemed "public benefit" from the Goffstown application; it was his understanding this RSA was flexible. As for seeking legal opinion he felt if there was a danger in interpretation certainly do so. Also, if any member has reservations on the number of districts to provide feedback so any article going forward is uniform and inclusive. Mr. Chartrand reiterated his position that he does not see this as about central business district revitalization but as pursuing more commercial real estate.

The Chair reviewed the proceedings that occurred at the past two meetings on this RSA and were there any further questions or comments as he feels it is prudent to send this on the BOS for their consideration; if changes are requested there is still time to do so before the ballot language is finalized.

Summarizing where the Commission was following this second presentation and discussion, the Chair asked if it was ready for a motion to move the draft onto the BOS for the next level of discussion. Ms. Hamel motioned the EEDC forward a letter of recommendation to the BOS for Statue RSA 79-E. The letter is to provide the background information and details as outlined in the presentation of the October 8, 2013 meeting presentation: seconded by Mr. Hampson. Motion carried.

Ms. Tokos asked if a one page summary/narrative (with maps) be prepared in language members could talk to the town people on the proposal and its intent; would be willing to work on a summary. There was agreement education will be an important component of adopting such a measure (and a TIF).

Mr. Manganiello was thanked for his work and preparation on this proposal.

4. Report: Executive Committee recommendations

The Executive Committee did meet after September meeting with members Mr. Sandberg, Ms. MacDonald, Ms. Corson and Mr. Lortie present to determine what would be the priorities and energies needed to move forward to the end of 2013 and before March Town meeting; being mindful of the resources available and priorities talked about at prior meetings.

The five priorities determined:

- To promote and support the recommendations of the TIF workgroup and to include community meetings as needed.
- Review and promote the RSA79-E Statue
- Sponsoring a Business After Hours function
(Mr. Hampson confirmed the EEDC is on the schedule for February 2014)
- Continue to work on with the business outreach subcommittee scheduling meetings making the businesses aware of what the Town has to offer; continue making the connection with town businesses.
- Continue the work on website updating content
(Also included work on the business data base and acknowledging Mr. Proulx's interest in doing this along with Mr. Stauber).

Mr. Sandberg acknowledged this did not prevent the group from looking at other items of interest but felt these items needed to be addressed in the remainder of the year.

Asking for comments on plan, several members expressed their support noting priorities appear doable with the time remaining and resources available. Individual members in each of the priorities were acknowledged and noted with the TIF working group meeting the week of October 14, there is the possibility to have more information and a final presentation before making any recommendations for moving forward.

Noting the absence of listing as a priority the development of an Economic Development chapter for the Town Master Plan, it was agreed between Executive Committee, Mr. Dean and Ms. von Aulock, that the upcoming months are busy with Town affairs/meetings; perhaps wait until new year to make decision. Could go two ways; a group of interested members use the interim to research other towns' Economic Development chapters in their Master Plans or wait until it was determined if Exeter will have the services of an Economic Development Director and have the individual take it on as a task. Mr. Sandberg has agreed to begin researching other NH towns Master Plans along with perhaps the assistance of Mr. Manganiello; willing to take the lead.

Mr. Dean commented the Master Plan is the responsibility of the Planning Board and ultimately it will be their responsibility for adoption/inclusion of an Economic Chapter but does think it is an excellent idea for EEDC to initiate the process.

Ms. Hamel commented at the All Boards meeting, Ms. Gilman noted there are points of economic development listed throughout the document; might be helpful in determining areas/topic to pursue. Mr. Sandberg agreed and suggested the Commission formalize the priority work plan with a motion to adopt the five outlined priorities with a sixth item for exploration, research and development of an Economic Development chapter for the Town Master Plan as the Commission goes into 2104.

Asking for a motion, Mr. Benjamin so moved; seconded by Mr. Chartrand. With no further discussion, the Chair called the question to accept the work plan as outlined going into 2104. Motion carried unanimously. With the vote, the Chair stated that will be the adopted work plan for the Commission going into 2104.

The Chair asked if any members are interested in working on the chapter on economic development for the Master Plan please contact him so can start putting together an outline for proceeding.

5. General announcements

Mr. Hampson, the lead for the Business After Hours function, commented a venue for the event should be decided very shortly. The Town Hall was suggested but no definitive decision was made. Mr. Dean suggested the 3rd floor (with the new flooring) and to work with the Arts Committee in using that space. Also, the possibility of securing a co-host to share in the cost of the food that is generally offered. Because it is at the end of a work day, refreshments are available but to what degree is the call of the hosting business. Although it is mostly a meet and greet, Mr. Hampson stated the host(s) were offered time at the end to speak to the group about their business/endeavor.

The new eatery recently opened in town was suggested as a possible co-host; Mr. Chartrand agreed to speak with the owners.

Mr. Dean commented the *Cobham* expansion project added 8 million dollars to the town tax base; a very successful project.

The BOS at their last meeting approved the bid for the Portsmouth Ave Sewer/Water work. No exact date for starting but hope to get going before adverse weather sets in; want people to be on alert when project does get underway. Businesses along Portsmouth Ave from High St. intersection to Green Hill Ave (just beyond Walgreen's) will be impacted as there will be only one way traffic permitted. As for a completion date, it is anticipated they will not be finished before winter conditions; will be shut down and resume work in spring.

Mr. Sandberg spoke of the focus groups the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission is hosting as a part in updating their Regional Master Plan. The master plan addresses the areas of transportation, housing, economic development, climate change and other regional issues. Mr. Stauber and Ms. von Aulock attended the last meeting in Portsmouth and the next scheduled meeting is in Hampstead on October 23, 2013. Ms. von Aulock said if unable to attend the meetings but wish to submit input you may go to RPC website (rpc-nh.org) and complete the survey. Mr. Sandberg also recommended reviewing the page on the Economic Development under the Regional Master Plan; found it interesting reading. Mr. Stauber sent on a copy of the page to the secretary and the Chair as well as a print out from *What is New Hampshire? 2013* edition. Chairman will provide a link for others to view.

Mr. Dean commented on the very successful Fall Festival held on Saturday, October 5, 2013 in downtown Exeter; event is getting our name out with this being a signature type of event. With a range of tickets available it provided for a good mix of attendees and participants; good group dynamics. Ms. Hamel commented on the amount of foot traffic in the Town.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Chartrand motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Lortie. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 am.
Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary