

Exeter Economic Development Commission

January 14, 2014

1. Call to order

Chairman Barry Sandberg called the meeting to order at 8:08 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Members present were Kathy Corson, Len Benjamin, Cynthia Tokos, Madeleine Hamel, Brandon Stauber, Dave Hampson, Selectman Dan Chartrand and Town Manager Russ Dean. Also in attendance: Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Building Inspector Doug Eastman and Selectman Don Clement.

2. Approval of past minutes

In reviewing the minutes, Ms. Corson felt the line item #4 in the December minutes was erroneous. The heading listed **Presentation/Discussion TIF work group presentation** but it was not a group presentation but that of the subcommittee chairman, Mr. Chartrand. Mr. Chartrand concurred and then noted it would best read the Chairman *turned the discussion over to Mr. Chartrand.*

Mr. Benjamin, referencing the paragraphs on returning to the voters for a second time for an approval of a TIF, Mr. Dean re-stated and clarified that reference by stating if the enabling legislation (RSA-162K giving the Town the authority to form a TIF) is passed at 2014 March meeting, it needs only to return to the voters for approval when the specifics of a TIF plan are finalized.

A typo listing the incorrect year was noted.

Mr. Chartrand moved to accept the minutes as presented with the three (3) amendments/correction to be incorporated into the final report; seconded by Mr. Benjamin. Motion carried with Mr. Stauber abstaining.

3. Town updates/announcements

Mr. Dean reviewed the upcoming Town calendar:

- Tuesday, January 21st the Board of Selectmen (BOS) will hold the obligatory budget and bonds hearing and deliberation to make their final recommendations on the warrant articles to put forth for action at Town meeting. The budget the BOS will be discussing on 21st is a result of the Town Manager being asked to come back with a list of budget revisions to reduce the amount of the operating budget to a level they felt was in keeping where that final amount should be. Mr. Dean stated It was accomplished with the help of the various department heads. The position of the Economic Development Director remains in this budget
- Warrant articles will then be posted on Monday, January 27, 2014
- Deliberative session is set for Saturday, Feb 1st at the Exeter Area High School with a start time of 9:00 am. As the budget and warrant articles are addressed, the public is permitted to comment on the topic/item under discussion. Later he noted, warrant articles may be amended by dollar amount only, the subject matter cannot be amended or altered. The final decision in any discussions is with the moderator.
- As discussed at EEDC meetings, RSA 79-E requires the information be on file with Town Clerk which has been done and material/map denoting the areas is on display in the Town lobby. The Selectmen will make a decision if this is to go forward during their deliberation following the discussion on the 21st.
- RSA 162-K, the legislation enabling the Town to form a TIF, will also be discussed at the BOS hearing on the 21st and again a decision will be made if this article is to go forward or not.
- Tuesday, March 11 is Town Election day where the voters will vote on the budget and warrant articles.

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Ms. Von Aulock displayed 11x 17 maps of the 79-E areas if anyone so wished; can email smaller sized graphic document if so desired.

Also, understanding the position of an Economic Development position was recently discussed at a BOS meeting, she wished to comment and clarify her and Mr. Eastman's roles as Town Planner and Code Enforcement Officer. They do not go out and solicit new businesses but do engage and physically tour sites with those interested in locating to Exeter, be it a property owner or their representatives. They have had many discussions with groups over the years; providing guidance and input as requested.

Mr. Dean returned to Town activities by noting:

- Hannaford Brothers supermarket chain will be assuming the lease at the former Stop and Shop store on Portsmouth Ave.; opening date spring of 2014. In spite of doing approximately \$500,000 dollars in renovations, it is mostly cosmetic and will not add to valuation. It is anticipated there will be employment for close to 300 people; some coming from other Hannaford stores, others hired from job fair being held at SST in the coming week.
- Mr. Eastman announced Liberty Mutual is moving into 100 Domain Drive and will be bringing in 300 new employees.
- The Green Bean expansion was re-approved by Zoning Board and renovations are underway.
- Plans for the microbrewery are moving along; will be located at Al's property on the Epping Road. Spring of 2014 is a target date to begin construction.
- Although not commercial activity, a six to seven million dollar residential project is planned for the former cement plant on the Hampton Road; just in the conceptual/Planning Board stage with no date for construction planned.
- The Great Bay Kids Company had approached the Town on leasing a piece of property behind the Rec. pool to build a new facility. They have three locations, Pease, Newmarket and Exeter operating from a leased facility on School Street. Mr. Chartrand added the meeting with the BOS was in a non-public session as they outlined their plans and looking for input before proceeding forward. He felt the selectmen were very much in favor as they have been providing daycare and afterschool programs in the town for a number of years and are very much a part of the economic picture for working parents. Proceeding with their plan, it will appear as a warrant article on the 2014 ballot as it does require approval from the Town voters to enter into a long term lease with the Town.
- Mr. Hampson noted his company, Cross Insurance, recently purchased the former Northeast Credit building on Portsmouth Ave. and is making interior renovations in anticipation of a spring opening. Currently, they are leasing their office space and with this move the group is making a long-term investment in Exeter.
- Continuing on town updates, Ms. von Aulock spoke of the walking tour of lower Portsmouth Ave. set for Wednesday, January 15th in an attempt to move forward with a Form Based Code (FBC) or a rendition of. Ms. Corson added this initiative has been under study for some time and with the assistance of Jeff Hyland of Ironwood Designs, will be walking Portsmouth Avenue to get a different perspective of that area. She feels adopting a FBC will be a way for the landowner to have a chance to use their property to the fullest, do away with some restrictive zoning and an opportunity to move the downtown along the Avenue.

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Mr. Stauber felt there was some confusion among the residents on what exactly is a Form Based Code and will there be media at the event to perhaps help explain the concept. Ms. Corson replied in affirmative and stated Mr. Hyland has done similar projects in Laconia and other communities and has excellent examples. Answering a query was it a long term objective to have FBC's in other parts of Town. Ms. von Aulock replied they are not looking beyond Portsmouth Ave. at this time.

With a request from the Chair, Ms. Corson and Ms. von Aulock agreed to do a presentation on FBC for the February meeting; hope to have the results of the Portsmouth Ave. walk.

- The Baggage Building (Welcome Center) project continues to move forward. A report and update will be given to the BOS sometime in February; the update is a requirement of the grant.
- Two business owners from Lincoln Street appeared before a recent BOS meeting expressing their concerns of cars parking all day in front of the businesses. Because that area has no restrictions on parking this is and has been a concern. The matter has been turned over to the Police Chief to see if some resolution can be arranged and report back to Selectmen.
- One of the bond articles this year is for upgrades to the water and sewer lines on Lincoln Street and surrounding streets. Because of their age and frequent malfunction it will be a welcomed upgrade.
- Procuring a Town/EEDC intern is also moving forward; will be posting at UNH.

4. **Updates/Discussion** TIF Work group

Mr. Sandberg referenced the conversation held at the December EEDC on the TIF proposal and where does the Commission go. There has been no change in the status of the proposal as no formal meeting to the work group has taken place in the past month. Acknowledging Mr. Chartrand wished to step down as Chairman of that subcommittee and after a conversation with Ms. MacDonald, the present Vice-Chair of the work group, Mr. Sandberg reported she agreed to assume the role as acting chair to determine the next steps and next activities. Mr. Chartrand did agree to stay on as a member of the working group

Ms. MacDonald wished to re-convene the original members of TIF group for a meeting but Mr. Sandberg was uncertain when that might be. Providing an update on the ongoing work (on TIF), Mr. Dean reported work has not stopped; Mr. Jutton is continuing to work on the potential build out valuations in different scenarios along with the assistance of the Town Assessor, John DeVittori and Ms. von Aulock. DPW is also reviewing their sidewalk program and developing costs for rehab/rebuilding the downtown sidewalks.

When the TIF group reconvenes under Ms. MacDonald's leadership, Mr. Jutton will return to review the status of his work and that of the draft document.

Mr. Stauber noted the financial commitment the EEDC has in this work and he would like to have Mr. Jutton come to the February meeting to provide update. Ms. Corson disagreed. In Mr. Jutton's first draft shown to the subcommittee, suggestions were made and she would like to see if those comments were incorporated into the document before any presentation occurs; feels he should met with work group first. Continuing discussion determined the vote at the March meeting is to approve the enabling legislation (RSA 162-K) to create a TIF and a presentation should not have any effect on that vote. Mr. Chartrand

agreed the Commission is entitled to a report but felt the timetable be left up to Mr. Jutton and not rush his work.

Ms. von Aulock, as a member of the TIF subcommittee, her priority, (after a meeting with Mr. Jutton) is to develop some educational material before the vote on the warrant; whose responsibility is that to be. Mr. Dean replied a fact sheet is being developed for each warrant article to be available for the deliberative session on February 1. Fact paragraphs for both the 79-E proposal and the RSA 162-K articles will be made for each; will circulate the paragraph for comments to the subcommittee. Normally, the fact sheet is an overview of article with possible supporting facts. Prepared sheet will be available on-line after the posting (of the warrant) on January 27, 2014.

It was stressed by both Mr. Dean and Mr. Chartrand to attend the February 1st deliberative session and lend support to the articles and budget presentation. Mr. Sandberg noted he will be there and will be ready to speak to the inclusion of the Economic Development Director in the budget.

Mr. Sandberg summarizing: the fact sheet will be developed by the Town Manager's office, the TIF subcommittee will reconvene most likely before the end of the month, he will follow up with Ms. MacDonald to relay the meeting's discussion and ultimately to have a (TIF) report to the full Commission, the timing at the determination of Mr. Jutton and the TIF subcommittee.

5. Presentation

Ms. Gilman had asked to speak to the Commission on the compatibility of historic preservation and economic development, but was unable to attend; Mr. Sandberg will contact to re-schedule.

6. Reports/updates

- Mr. Hampson reported the Chamber's Business After Hours event is set for February 18, 2014 from 5 to 7 pm at the Town Hall, second floor in the Art gallery. The Commission will be sharing the space with the artists' group who will have an exhibit already on site; have agreed to acknowledge the group and their work. The co-host for the event is Nadeau's Catering and he will speak a few minutes as well as the EEDC as sponsors. Mr. Sandberg agreed to speak for the EEDC. He will be working with Ms. Tokos and Mr. Eastman on display/promotional materials; new and perhaps the displays from Small Business Expo. Members were encouraged to attend and mingle with attendees; excellent time for networking.

Ms. Corson expressed the need to have some sort of identification to distinguish the EEDC members; it will be arranged.

Ms. Hamel, Chair of the Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee, is working on an information material for just this kind of event. She and Ms. Tokos are preparing an information packet with individual sheets on each program so the packet can be business specific when making their visitations and will include an expanded summary sheet on who and what is the EEDC. It was deemed appropriate to have the fact sheets developed for the Deliberative Session also available for the Business After Hours function. She added her work group is continuing to meet with the individual businesses; a report will be forthcoming in a month or two.

As to Ms. Hamel's concerns on how the event would be promoted she was assured it was a popular event with the Chamber members and they will handle the inserts and email communication as well as the printed media. She also thanked Ms. von Aulock for making the updates to the Business section of Town web site.

- In a conversation discussing expenditures for developing promotional material, the Chair referenced the EEDC yearend financial report. Although not in attendance, Treasurer Brian Lortie did send electronically the financial report and was then forwarded to the Recording Secretary to be on record with the February meeting materials. Noting the Commission expended \$3200 during the year; payment of the intern services, professional development and promotional materials; all expenditures approved by the Commission. Mr. Dean noted billing for the TIF consultant has not been received and is not reflected in the year end statement.

7. General announcements

The intent is to still continue to reach out to local developers/contractors to speak at the meeting as their schedule permits. Also Mr. Dean is in touch with Ms. Karen Pollard, Director of Community Development for the city of Rochester and hopes to have her as a guest presenter; again as schedules permit. And Mr. Sandberg will re-connect with Ms. Gilman.

8. 2014, 1st quarter meetings

The February 11 meeting date remains, but with Town voting day on March 11 and some members being at the polls, the meeting date is being pushed ahead to **March 18, 2014**. The 2nd quarter dates remain the same; second Tuesday of the month.

With no further business, Mr. Chartrand motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Hampson.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub
Recording secretary