

**Exeter Economic Development Commission**

**February 11, 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: Len Benjamin, Cynthia Tokos, Madeleine Hamel, Dave Hampson, Brandon Stauber, Brian Lortie and Selectman Dan Chartrand. Also in attendance: Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Building Inspector Doug Eastman and Selectman Don Clement. Guest: Selectwoman Julie Gilman

Because of later commitments from several of the members, the Chair asked to deviated from the prepared agenda in order for all the members to hear Ms. Gilman's presentation

**2. Approval of past minutes**

Mr. Chartrand motioned to approve the minutes of EEDC meeting of the January 14, 2014 as presented; seconded by Mr. Hampson. Motion carried with Mr. Lortie abstaining. (Ms. Hamel was not present for the vote.)

**3. Sub-Committee Reports**

- Chamber event

Mr. Hampson, coordinator of the Business After Hours event, in collaboration with the Chamber is set for Tuesday February 18, from 5-7 pm at the upper gallery of the Town Hall. Nadeau's Subs and Catering is the co-sponsor of the event. He acknowledged working with Ms. Tokos and Ms. Hamel on the materials to be on display boards and individual packets to be taken by the attendees.

Ms. Tokos displayed and outlined the materials included in the folder; the theme of the material is "Why Exeter" which is a drop down under Business on the Town web site. Ms. Tokos noted four Exeter businesses are profiled with a photograph and solicited testimonial; they ultimately hope to have six suitable for displaying on web site.

Mr. Stauber stated at an earlier meeting when discussing web site design/features, monies were approved from EEDC budget for the consultants to incorporate such a feature to the Business section of Town web site. That has not occurred and suggested re-contacting consultants.

Ms. Hamel thanked Mr. Hampson and Ms. Tokos for their work on securing the venue, the promotional materials and to Ms. von Aulock for her preparation of the maps of the different districts where the programs are available to fit the folder format.

Mr. Chartrand expressed his appreciation for their work in preparing the materials and felt the downtown shop owners would be receptive in having certain pieces of the material displayed. Mr. Sandberg also expressed his appreciation for the thoroughness of their work.

In summary, Mr. Hampson felt it would be helpful to have items for door-prizes/raffle; suggestions and willingness to procure followed. He suggested members arrive by 5:00pm with Mr. Sandberg giving his welcome remarks mid-way through the event, allowing time for additional guests to arrive. The Chamber will advise when the closing remarks from EEDC and Nadeau's Subs are appropriate.

#### **4. Presentation Julie Gilman: Historic Preservation and Economic Development**

Ms. Gilman, a member of both the Heritage Commission and the Board of Selectmen, stated she was representing the Heritage Commission for this presentation. She noted the Town's Heritage Commission was established by State statute to offer viable means for the local government to manage, recognize, protect historical and cultural resources in a number of different venues; is an advisory board only.

Exeter is one of twenty towns in NH designated as a Certified Local Government town; a designation denoting Exeter for taking care of its historical resources. This status also allows the Town to apply for funding grants (non-matching) from the NH Division of Historic Resources (NHDHR) who receives its funding monies from the (federal) Certified Local Government Program.<sup>1</sup>

In 2012 the Heritage Commission applied and received funding to perform a local Mapping Survey to document through maps, photographs and narrative the patterns of growth in Exeter history. What was shown at this meeting was the product of that survey with the inclusion of additional photographs to supplement the report. It is an overview of the events and economic development occurring throughout the Town's history. Another objective of the mapping survey was to prioritize what other areas the (Heritage Commission) might want to look at in further detail.

In 2013, a grant proposal was submitted and approved by NHDHR (with an additional approval by Governor's Executive Council) to study one of these areas; the Franklin Street /River St block. It is presently an area before various Town Boards and Commissions for review as an extensive re-development project is being proposed by Franklin Street property owner, Al Lampert. The survey will photograph each building; document its former and present owners, age of structure and its purpose/function.

This Power Point presentation entitled "March Through History" is a compilation of all the maps of the Town obtained by the consultants with text largely from Charles Bell's *History of Exeter*.

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<sup>1</sup> The CLG Program is a preservation partnership between local, the state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the local level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Offices in each state, with each town working through a certification process to be recognized as a CLG; then become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program.

Ms. Gilman's narration supported the slides displayed on the screen illustrating the activities occurring in the Town starting with the 1700's. The River was a leading economic factor in the 1700's as it served as a mode of transportation to move local commodities to offsite locales; ship building, lumber, livestock. The River provided a source of water power for a number of commercial ventures; saw mills, a grist mill, another mill for the making of the potato starch and even a snuff mill.

Slides of the colored maps from the study represented how the growth patterns developed over the years. With the arrival of the B & M railroad around 1840 the town's population moved to the west. With the coming of the trollies in the late 1800's the population moved east toward Hampton

Around the mid 1800's, during the Industrial Revolution, larger industries came to Exeter. One was the Exeter Manufacturing Company with shoe and boot manufacturing following.

Ms. Gilman's presentation continued to document economic development noting around 1980's there was a boom but then leveled off. She finished her talk stating this presentation has been shown at the Town Hall on several occasions but is still a work in progress; invited suggestions and comments. Ms. von Aulock commented on possibly incorporating more on the fishing industry as the Town logo features the alewife.

When queried, Ms. Gilman outlined a function of the Heritage Commission is to carry out the Demolition Review Ordinance. If there is a request to demolish a structure that is more than 50 years in age, the HC needs to review the application looking at the structures' history, is its style important to the Town and/or representative of the era it was built, were there any notable occupants to the Town and is it an important resource to the town; again advisory. She clarified the Heritage Commission deals Town-wide where the Historic District Commission is a regulatory body dealing with specifically the Town's Historic District.

## **5. Town Updates**

- Follow up on Deliberative Session

The Chair thanked the members of the Commission for their strong presence at the deliberative session. Asking for comments, Mr. Chartrand referencing the debate at the session (on the position of an Economic Development Director) between regulatory and development wished to thank Ms. von Aulock and Mr. Eastman, although regulatory, for their work in fostering economic development. The fact the Economic Development Director remains as a budget item was to him a significant victory but EEDC does have a 3 point agenda before them on March 11 Town ballot. Article 18 asks for the adoption of the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Initiative as outlined in Chapter 79-E of state law and Article 19 asks for the adoption of the enabling legislation RSA 162-K to establish Tax Increment Financing Districts

## Draft Minutes

Mr. Chartrand felt this 3 point agenda needs to be presented as a whole; the work of the EEDC. He urged the members to write letters of support but to not wait until the last weeks as you will be competing for print- space as other letters begin to file in.

Ms. Hamel felt the deliberative session underscored the lack of awareness of the work of the EEDC and what the Commission does; felt that could easily be ratified. She agreed the upcoming Chamber event will be beneficial but feels the need for more public relations to report on the activities of Commission; the need to establish a presence.

Mr. Chartrand acknowledged there was always room for improvement but felt the profile of the EEDC has grown immensely the past two years; a testimony to its work. In discussing visibility and the relatively low attendance of residents at the deliberative session, the question of the session being televised live to enable those who are unable to attend. That question and that of the EEDC meetings not being televised will be presented to the Town Manager for inquiry.

Ms. von Aulock suggested sending out an email invite as it might generate more attendance for the Chamber/EEDC function; more of a personal touch than reading in newspaper. The Chair asked Ms. Hamel if she and perhaps Ms. Tokos and Mr. Hampson could research the protocol for such a mailing.

Ms. von Aulock volunteered she will save any update on Form Based Codes and last month's site walk along Portsmouth Ave. for a future meeting.

- Executive Committee Nominations process

Without a formal nominating process, the Chairman will reach out to one or two members to formulate said process so to formally nominate Executive Committee members as called for in EEDC policy and procedures.

- TIF Work group

The Chair noted the work group did meet on January 30, 2014 but with the Chair of the group absence at this meeting, a report will be presented at March meeting.

To prevent a conflict with Town Voting day, **the next meeting will be March 18, 2014**

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Chartrand; seconded by Mr. Benjamin. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ginny Raub