

Exeter Economic Development Commission

May 13, 2014

1. Call to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg called the meeting to order at 8:04 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town office building. Members present were: Kathy Corson, Len Benjamin, Brian Lortie, Dave Hampson, Madeleine Hamel, Jason Proulx, Selectman Dan Chartrand, Brandon Stauber and Town Manager Russ Dean. Also in attendance: Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock and Building Inspector Doug Eastman

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Chartrand moved to accept the minutes of the April 08, 2014 EEDC meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Dean. Motion carried with three members abstaining. (Ms. Hamel was not present for the vote)

3. Town updates/announcements

• **BOS goal setting meeting**

Mr. Dean stated the final report has not been received from the facilitator; working from a draft. The goal setting meeting was held April 19 upstairs at the Town Hall. During the 5 hour meeting different issues were explored for focus this year; some will be brought to the All Boards Meeting II on May 21, 2014 for further discussion.

Some ideas discussed but not limited to; regulation versus development, determining the steps for permitting and what is the role of Selectboard and Planning Board in the process and how the two may interface. Explored the role of the Technical Review Committee (TRC) in permitting; what will be the role of the newly approved Economic Development position with the TRC. Zoning regulations and review were discussed.

Board members expressed their top three priorities for the year and the last half of meeting was devoted to taking those priorities and creating the top goals for upcoming year; again emphasized working from draft as report is subject for approval by Selectboard. Mr. Dean felt the top agenda items would be of interest to EEDC.

Goal #1: Update Master Plan with pro-development strategies. Review and update Chapter 1 (Existing and Future land Use), Chapter 2 (Housing and Residential Life) and add a Chapter on Economic Development. Outdate of March 2015

Goal# 2: Develop strategies to diversify tax base; talked of developing some specific strategies for diversification. Outdate of October 2014.

Goal #3: Review current land use rules and processes to ensure efficiency in fees with possible revisions/recommendation; may involve joint meetings with Planning Board and EEDC. Outdate of March 2015.

Two other goals discussed but more internal was organizational alignment; how are the various Town committees structured to meet the goals/objectives of the Selectboard, Planning Board,

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EEDC and other Boards June 2014; an ongoing activity. The other objective is how well is the Town doing in executing the projects currently ongoing i.e. Great Dam removal, Waste Water Municipal Agreement(s).

It was the intent to present these at the All Boards meeting on May 21 for their input and recommendations so hopefully can start working toward the goals. Mr. Chartrand felt upcoming meeting was important and urged to attend.

Ms. Corson raised the question of the Economic Development Director being present at the TRC meetings. Was unsure what their role would be; who are they representing at that time? Mr. Dean said in other communities with that position it was not uncommon to have them at such sessions. But both felt it was an interesting question and Ms. Corson would like to hear from other towns how it is handled and what is their role at that point.

Ms. Von Aulock offered to give this group or attendees at the All Boards Meeting a brief overview of the process they undertake at TRC; not sure if all are familiar with the proceedings.

Copies of the minutes from the first All Boards meeting held in September were distributed for members to review. The meeting is set for May 21, 2014 at 6:30 pm at the Town Hall. Mr. Cliff Sinnott of the Rockingham Planning Commission will again be the facilitator. The premise for this meeting is to build off of the brainstorming and visioning session of the first meeting; looking for specific actions. Various Boards, Committees, and Commissions have had this as an agenda items for their monthly meeting and perhaps will bring items to the table for discussion.

Mr. Dean commented because of our Town form of government, the Selectboard is the governing body and the Planning Board by State statute is responsible for the Master Plan; acknowledged it takes a broad group to bring things into focus.

If individuals are unable to make the meeting but have items they wished shared, pass on to the Town Manger's office and will see they are shared and part of the discussion.

- **Economic Development position**

Mr. Dean reported the Town is presently reviewing the classification of non-union Town employees, and as such the title of the ED position became the Economic Development Administrator (EDA). There is no change in job description or function but designates a lack of supervisory responsibilities. Forty plus applications have been received to date with some very strong candidates. Closing date is May 23, 2014 and in speaking with the Chair of the BOS there is the intent to set up a screening committee with broad representation; member of the Board, a citizen, a member of the business committee, perhaps a member of the EEDC. Mr. Dean anticipates starting the process the end of the month, early June at the latest and feels there will be two rounds (of interviews) to get to a consensus.

- **Portsmouth Avenue Use survey**

Ms. von Aulock spoke of an email survey sent to Town committee members and others on their experiences in using Portsmouth Avenue. If members did not receive it, the survey may be found on the Town website on the Planning Department webpage. The responses will help the Department as they look at Form Based codes or some other zoning changes for the Portsmouth Avenue corridor.

Mr. Eastman spoke of the number of developers on potential projects he and Ms. von Aulock have talked with. Very encouraged if the potential projects go forward but did caution it takes time. The activity is mostly residential; number of inquiries on senior housing. And, Ms. Corson added housing in the commercial district. Mr. Dean added from the census, Exeter's population of those over 65 is about three times that of surrounding communities.

The developers for the 27 Chestnut Street property appeared before the April ZBA meeting for a variance on building height restrictions for their proposed two multi-unit residential buildings. Also, he and Ms. von Aulock had a meeting with Great Bay Kids and reviewed possible options on sites suitable for their needs.

4. Sub-committee reports

- **Business Retention and Expansion sub-committee**

Ms. Hamel reported the work group met on May 8 to review the initiative to promote 79-E. Noting that various articles about this initiative have appeared, the focus is now to host a special event at a time when the Economic Development Administer (EDA) is on board. Interested parties from the four designated areas as well as speakers from other communities where 79-E has been used will be invited to listen and learn of how the statute works. It would also give the EDA an opportunity to meet and mingle with some of the property owners and developers; looking for input from Commission to move forward.

Ms. Corson thought it was an excellent idea and suggested collaborating with the Chamber and perhaps it be a part of their Lunch and Learn series; also to reconsider a late August date for meeting as the availability of the populace is questionable.

Ms. Hamel added they would use a feature of the present data base that provides names and addresses of the property owners in the four areas of focus. Mr. Dean added they compiled such a list and feels it is current; will pass on.

Consensus was it was a good idea and the Chair thanked Ms. Hamel and her work group for taking on this initiative. The plan will be brought back to EEDC when specifics are finalized.

5. Election of Executive Committee

Mr. Sandberg proceeded to read from the Town Ordinance referencing the structure the EEDC is operating under: a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. All are elected for a one year term and may be re-elected if it is the wish of the Commission; also the duties of the officers and committee structure outlined.

Wishing to have an open nomination process the Commission agreed to take nominations from the floor as opposed to have a nominating committee with one slate of candidates. At this time the Chairman asked for nominations from the floor.

Mr. Chartrand nominated Mr. Proulx for the position of Chairman. Mr. Proulx agreed to accept the nomination.

Mr. Hampson nominated Ms. Corson for the position of Chairman. Ms. Corson agreed to accept the nomination.

With no other nominations, the Chair prepared for the vote. The preferred method for voting was by show of hands. The Chair noted those voting would be the standing members of the Commission, the Ad Hoc members; Ms. Corson representative of the PB, Mr. Chartrand representative for Selectboard and Mr. Dean representative for Town. The Chair would vote only in the event of a tie.

By the show of hands, Ms. Corson was elected Chairman.

The Chair asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. Ms. Corson nominated Mr. Hampson for the position of Vice Chairman. Mr. Hampson agreed to accept the position. Upon inquiry by Mr. Sandberg, Mr. Proulx agreed to accept the position.

With no other nominations, the Chair called the vote noting there should be nine votes cast. With a show of hands, Mr. Hampson was elected Vice Chairman.

Ms. Corson nominated Mr. Proulx for the position of Secretary. Mr. Proulx agreed to accept. By a unanimous vote, Mr. Proulx was elected to the position of Secretary.

Mr. Lortie agreed to stay on as Treasurer although the position is not stated in the Town Ordinance.

Mr. Sandberg this would be his last meeting as Chairman for the group but would stay on through the summer to aid in the transition the Executive Committee.

6. General Announcements

No further discussion

7. Agenda for June 10, 2014 meeting

- Follow up on All Boards II meeting
- More information on Economic Development Administrator position.
The Chair and Mr. Dean confirmed if any EEDC member wishes to be a part of the screening committee to be in contact with Town Manager's office; be mindful of the possible time commitment.

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- Ms. Corson felt a TIF subcommittee meeting should be held before June meeting; will confer with Ms. MacDonald on the possibility. Also believes an appointment be scheduled to get on the agenda of BOS and give a short overview of past proceedings and ask for direction for the work group; stop or move forward.
- Ms. Hamel and her work group would like to see a link to the information on 79-E; feels there is an abundance of material on Statue but difficult to access. Mr. Dean noted there was a link under the Business heading on Town website; but will work with group further to help with ease of access. Ms. Hamel stated she didn't know there was a limitation on the number of items permitted on front page.
- Mr. Sandberg would ask the new Executive Committee to further research the televising of the EEDC meetings; feels this would give the Commission more visibility and provide more information on the various topics discussed. The morning meeting times does preclude some from attending; would be beneficial for those interested in proceedings of group.
- On May 16 the NH Broadband Conference will be held at the Grappone Center in Concord recognizing broadband access as a major component in economic development. Mr. Stauber will be on a panel discussing his activities in the entrepreneurial sector as it relates to broadband. Invited members to attend; if not would be willing to give a report at next meeting.
- Mr. Sandberg offered condolences to the Brentwood community and the family of Officer Steve Arkell who was fatally shot while on active duty the day before.
- Mr. Dean commented on the infrastructure projects completed or work in progress; all present a positive image of a Town moving forward.
- Ms. Corson, as Community Leader with the Squamscott Y project, announced they will be breaking ground in August; a major contribution to the Town. Also remarked on the need for locals to support the newly opened Hannaford supermarket.
- Mr. Dean thanked Mr. Hampson, Ms. Tokos, and others for their presence at the Small Business Expo sponsored by the Chamber and SST Marketing students back in April; good display and good representation.
- No summer intern at this time; can be discussed at a another time

In closing, Mr. Sandberg expressed his experience as serving as Chair for the past two years as rewarding as well as challenging at times. He thanked Mr. Dean and the staff for the support and expertise they brought to the group and for the members for their strong participation in the effort of raising the level of discussion on economic development.

Mr. Chartrand thanked him and added he led wisely and well.

With a motion by Mr. Chartrand; seconded by Ms. Corson meeting was adjourned at 9:20 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub
Recording secretary