

**Exeter Economic Development Commission**

**June 10, 2104**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairwoman Kathy Corson called the meeting to order at 8:07 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building. Members present were: Dave Hampson, Brandon Stauber, Madeleine Hamel, Barry Sandberg, Beth MacDonald and Town Manager Russ Dean.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hampson moved to accept the minutes of the May 16, 2014 meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Stauber. Motion carried with Ms. MacDonald abstaining. (Ms. Hamel was not present for vote)

**3. Current Business**

- ***Discussion – Role of EEDC relating to new Economic Development Administrator (EDA)***

In anticipation of the Economic Development Administrator (EDA) coming on board sometime this summer, Ms. Corson wished input from members present on what role/relationship do they envision the Administrator to have with the Commission; understood guidelines will be provided by Board of Selectmen but what thoughts can be offered to BOS as to the role of the Commission to facilitate the success of the position.

Responses from the members included but not limited to:

- Certain there will be a model with both quantitative and qualitative measures for success but hoped they are provided with the tools and resources to achieve; EEDC can serve as a resource/advisor
- Appears the EDA will be highly qualified and can provide the professional leadership and support on a number of current EEDC projects; the go-to-person. Their role would be modeled after that of the present Town Planner; liaison between Town and EEDC.
- Will depend on the experience and expertise of selected candidate as to what level of support and guidance the Commission could provide; more of a wait and see before new ideas are crafted.
- Mr. Dean, referencing the original priority and ranking plan and the updated version developed during the visioning session felt the clearer the EEDC is on their mission the easier it will be for EDA to provide the needed/desired support.
- The EEDC being a policy advisor group to BOS, Town and to the EDA. By shifting some hands-on activities to staff, would allow more time (for EEDC) to consider goals of BOS and how to proceed to develop specifics for implementation to achieve those goals. By dividing tasks/responsibilities it would allow Commission to focus on the development of the Economic chapter for the Master Plan providing structure and guidance to the Town over the long term. The Commission could/should help the newly appointed EDA become integrated into the community in a variety of scenarios.

Mr. Dean, summarizing from expressed comments, felt it might be best to wait until the EDA is on staff and then have some interaction. In interim suggested members forward their ideas on what might be the focus for the individual in say first six months and forward to Chair to be presented in conversation with Administrator.

Because many comments referenced the need for a chapter on Economic Development for the Master Plan be initiated and possibly under the guidance of the EDA, the Chair permitted discussion on the

agenda item of ***Budget for Master Plan Chapter on Economic Development*** listed under **Goals for the coming months.**

Mr. Dean stated two scenarios; a paid consultant to work with BOS, the EDA, and the EEDC to ensure all are working on same page or a capable graduate intern to serve as the EDA assistant/scribe. The possibility of the intern moving on before work was complete as opposed to having a deliverable with the consultant was cited.

Mr. Sandberg echoed it would be a combination of resources working under the leadership of the EDA, the EEDC and the Planning Board/Department as it is a function, by State statue, of the Planning Board; did concur with Ms. Corson's comment this chapter is the blueprint/compass for where we go.

Ms. Corson noted there are models out there of other communities for possible structure and has made an initial contact with Cliff Sinnott of the Rockingham Planning Commission on a budget amount for consideration.

- ***Discussion of Meeting Times/Televising of Meeting***

The Chair noted the Executive Committee discussed the possibility of having a monthly night meeting and/or the televising of the meetings; present meeting time may preclude those wishing to become more involved. Televising also permits the EEDC and the to-be Administrator more visibility and what the Commission is all about: asked for comments.

- Mr. Stauber felt it was excellent idea for monthly night meeting allowing for more participation and having a "live audience" permits for more interaction.
- Mr. Dean replied it does not have to be synonymous; one other Town committee does meet in morning and is televised.
- Mr. Sandberg noted when the group reconvened some four years ago, Tuesday am happened to be a time when the then- members were available; nothing to preclude from changing date or time.
- Ms. Hamel wished to be certain it did not conflict with Chamber activities.

Ms. Corson will contact other members not present for their opinions. Mr. Hampson and others felt regardless of meeting date and time, meetings should be televised. The Chair asked the Town Manager to check with television crew for possible conflicts with either time; will be an action item on agenda for next meeting.

#### **4. Goals for the coming months**

- ***Budget of Master Plan Chapter on Economic Development***

The chair referenced the previous discussion but acknowledged it will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting when more financial information becomes known and the experience of the EDA appointee.

- ***TIF subcommittee Follow-up and scheduling of discussion with Board of Selectmen***

In the absence of the Chair of this subcommittee at past meetings, Ms. Corson summarized the feelings of the Commission for the subcommittee to prepare a brief overview of what work has been done to date and convey to the BOS the feeling that the concept of a TIF has merit but in view of the results of the Town vote in what direction did the Board wish the Commission to proceed-if at all.

Ms. Hamel suggested waiting to have a conversation with new appointee; they may have had experience with a TIF

Ms. MacDonald, Chair of the subcommittee, stated the original work was centered on the greater downtown and now with two major anticipated projects from that area in the works it negates the focus; feels the timing was not right.

Mr. Dean agreed with Ms. MacDonald and Ms. Hamel on allowing the new person the opportunity to view the picture overall and perhaps their having a different perspective on the TIF and its applications.

The idea of (the Commission) now having a better understanding of a TIF and its capabilities was expressed noting there is no reason it could not be moved to another location.

Mr. Stauber stated others suggested applying a TIF, in some configuration, to help fund the water and sewer infrastructure to Epping Road and Holland Way. Again, the timing may not be right as particular properties in these areas become poised for development.

- ***EEDC Charter Review***

Mr. Dean at an earlier meeting outlined the time line and activities of the former Economic Development Commission created as a BOS ordinance in May 1968 that serves as the ordinance this Commission is operating under. Later in 1974 an Industrial Development Authority was established primarily to develop a Business Industrial Park in the Industrial Drive area. A State statute permitted this group to form a not-for profit status to enter into a variety of financial transactions. It appears this not-for-profit status survives today as a certificate is on file with the State. The funds currently in the name of the EEDC account are the remaining monies from this Authority. If repealed the balance of the funds would be returned to the Town's general fund.

Town Counsel determined this is the ordinance the present EEDC is operating under; a BOS ordinance that can be repealed or amended by the Board. Because there is language and provisions in the original not being used by this group the question is to repeal and replace or revise.

Mr. Dean listed some of the provisions not necessarily being the practices followed by this Commission. The scenario presented has a number of amendments/off shoots of the original BOS ordinance becoming somewhat fuzzy.

Ms. MacDonald cautioned on the repeal of the not-for-profit status if still current. With the change in Tax Codes over the years you might not be able to do some of the things you could under the initial formation. There was agreement to check with Treasurer, Brian Lortie, to determine if annual reports have been filed.

Again, there was agreement there are two separate issues here; the not-for profit status and if dissolved to position the Commission to have access to the funds to continue the work of the group. Cleaning up the ordinance is a priority to best reflect the membership and activities of the present Commission. Mr. Dean, to his thinking, repeal would be best and the Selectmen could re-instate the Commission as a regular advisory board; mission remains the same. Repeal (of the ordinance) is a public process requiring three public hearings. Will continue with sorting of details.

## 5. Reports

- ***Business Retention and Expansion***

Ms. Hamel reported the subcommittee is continuing to work on a September function introducing the new Economic Development Administrator and promoting the 79-E provision; will return with more details and agenda.

Although Cynthia Tokos was not a member of the subcommittee her talent and willingness to work with the work group in developing the marketing materials was acknowledged and most appreciated. She has since stepped down as a member of the Commission but hoped she would be willing to be a resource for the Commission as her time permits.

- ***Economic News***

Mr. Dean:

- Great Bay Kids Co. will be building at an Epping Road site
- The two- hour parking is now in effect at certain spots on Lincoln St.
- The plan developed by PlanNH for the Lincoln St. corridor is to be re-visited
- The acquisition of the Baggage building for a Welcome Center is on hold; complying with the requested regulations proved too costly
- Appears Neighborhood Brewery still coming to Epping Rd but still has some work to do before actual locating.
- String Bridge renovations appear to be moving up the queue; approval at 2008 Town meeting for bonding was dependent on receiving State bridge-aid. Although DPW focusing on the structural design may be an opportunity to incorporate some economic-visitor-visual-attraction components.

Ms. Corson on Planning Board activities:

- Preliminary site plan for residential units and a 3-lot sub division at 27 Chestnut St. was presented.
- Preliminary site plan for residential units at former cement factory site on Exeter Rd. was heard

- ***Follow up on All Boards II Meeting***

- The desire to expand water and sewer to Epping Rd. was heard. It seems to have support from BOS; will most likely hear more.
- With an expressed emphasis on upgrades to downtown, DPW is drafting a sidewalk project for the 2016 CIP

With no further business, Ms. MacDonald motioned to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Hamel.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub  
Recording Secretary