

Exeter Economic Development Commission

November 10, 2015

- **Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Lizabeth MacDonald called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM in the Nowak Room of the Town Office building. Members present were Dan Chartrand, Kelly Bergeron, Brian Lortie, Madeleine Hamel and Town Manager Russ Dean. Also in attendance were Economic Development Director Darren Winham and Building Inspector Doug Eastman.

It was determined there was not a quorum of members present so only discussion items would be addressed.

Ms. MacDonald recognized and introduced Mr. Todd Delucca from the audience as the newly appointed President of the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce. She added Mr. Deluca has an extensive business background along with nonprofit organizational experience. Mr. Deluca, commenting on his brief time as the Chamber's president spoke on the dedicated staff (of the Chamber) and the business people met at various functions as engaged, passionate about their businesses and their community and anxious in creating a community of business professionals.

Mr. Dean continued providing information on the role and history of the Commission; noting this group fosters business and industrial growth within the community. And added the Chamber and the Commission had worked together on joint ventures and looked forward to doing so in the future. Ms. MacDonald offered she and Mr. Delucca had talked on the Chamber's Economic Development Committee and the possibility of reactivating the group.

Anticipating the arrival of an additional member to make the quorum, the Chair asked to deviate from the posted agenda.

- **Development Projects at Other Board Meetings**

- **Planning Board**

Ms. Bergeron, the Planning Board representative to the Commission, commented the Board worked through the process and approved the 80 Epping Road project with several conditions. She acknowledged it was a difficult project to work through and frustration was experienced by both parties. In the process of working with this project some changes in procedure were determined. In future projects the applicant will meet with the Town's Technical Review Committee (TRC) prior to the first appearance before the Planning Board; this will allow the Board to see the comments of the municipal departments before they (PB) "accept jurisdiction" of the case.

Ms. Bergeron also reported the Board with the assistance of a subcommittee, the interim Town Planner, Glenn Greenwood and Town legal counsel, completed the update of their rules of procedures; had not been updated since 2001.

This is also the period when potential zoning amendments are heard by the Board to determine feasibility if the proposed change/additions are to go forward. A series of three public hearings are required before any change/amendment is accepted allowing it to be placed on 2016 ballot for voters' approval. At last meeting, the Town's Natural Resource Planner, Kristen Murphy, gave a brief presentation on the Healthy Lawn Clean Water initiative being put forward by a group of Town committee members and private citizens; its focus is on the application of fertilizers within the Shoreline Overlay Protection District and the Aquifers Protection District of the Town.

- **Conservation Committee**

No report was available

- **Historic District Commission (HDC)**

Mr. Dean, speaking to the HDC, said members are continuing to work through the certificate of approval process along with the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer Doug Eastman and Deputy Code Enforcement Officer, Barb McEvoy. Both Mr. Eastman and Ms. McEvoy will be attending their monthly HDC meeting on November 19 to continue discussing process issues. All this in an attempt to focus on those issues identified in the MRI Planning Report.

Mr. Dean also spoke of the meetings occurring at the staff level and again in an attempt to work through some of the internal items addressed in the Planning report. Ms. Murphy, the Natural Resource Planner, will now represent the Conservation Commission. She has been attending the meetings but will now be the designated representative for the Commission; no longer will a member of the Commission be in attendance.

Another item is to put together a prioritization plan. Presently, when a project comes into the Planning Department there is interaction within the department but not one shared site--technology wise--where a project can be viewed, updated and viewed by vested individuals to know where the project stands.

Also, the site plan review process is being closely looked at. The present flow chart does not reflect some of the steps/issues an applicant might need to address i.e. State dredge and fill applications, wetland impacts to be reviewed by Conservation Commission, Obviously the complexity of the project will determine the calendar days that a project may or may not receive a decision or approval in that 65 day approval window. May be important for the EEDC to

review as different projects come up to understand what the Town can and cannot do and what the roles of the other Town boards will be.

Continuing, he noted the MRI report highlighted a need for a quarterback to guide the applicant through the planning process so everyone is on same page.

Mr. Winham noted if it is a commercial project he will act as the “quarterback” for the application. Presently he is preparing an excel spreadsheet with a time line dictated by the steps the applicant will need to preform so they will know what they can expect from the Town and when. But he emphasized the need to fix the internal process before going to the volunteer boards that will be making the decisions. There is the need for communication with and between the land use boards; that will be addressed. But he did acknowledge the flow chart needs to be dynamic in that there are times when an applicant will receive notice that the State or some other agency requesting further information.. .

Mr. Winham did say if there are design changes by the applicant in the planning process it will change the timeline of the project as occurred in the 80 Epping Road project and may cause additional delays in the approval process.

Mr. Chartrand, referencing the MRI Planning Report suggested all to read it; will be on Town web site shortly. He felt the report highlighted the current shift (on the Boards) from the strictly preserve and protect philosophy of the past 10-15 years to a more development and business friendly approach while still respecting and preserving. He also feels there will be some “hurly burly” on the volunteer boards as we worked through this process.

Mr. Dean replied he did not feel it was “fixing” the process as much as refitting the process. The Town should be looking and flagging the weaknesses that could hold up the processes; felt the language of the ordinances may be tightened up to be more specific and cited an issue arising in the 80 Epping Road project on the Shoreland Protection Boundary. He also referenced the Wildlife Assessment Survey preformed late into the approval process. Ms. Bergeron offered an explanation for such action asked by the PB; felt information provided by applicant was not sufficient and couldn’t provide so they went outside for additional information. She expressed reservations if making such ordinances more specific would be helpful; something to look at.

In a response to a question on the acronym CUP that is used quite often in the planning process. She defined it as a Conditional Use Permit and what it detailed.

- **Treasurer’s report**

EEDC treasurer, Brian Lortie, reported a balance of \$7300.00 in the Commission’s account. An interest amount of \$2.50 was added to the balance and the only other

transaction for 2105 was an expenditure of three thousand dollars (\$3000.00) toward the Flexible Zoning initiative. He did extend the non-profit designation with the State for another 5 year period. (He acknowledged he used his credit card for the \$7.00 filing fee but without a quorum, the Commission could not vote to reimburse Mr. Lortie; tabled for next meeting)

- **Project Updates**

Following the discussion and vote at the October meeting to move forward on the proposed change to zoning designation on the Epping Road, Mr. Winham did provide the interim Town Planner with the information and Mr. Greenwood is preparing the appropriate format and language. Mr. Winham said it will be ready for the initial hearing at the December 10, 2015 meeting of the Planning Board. Chairman Proulx will do the presentation; it is hoped other members will be present for support. When the language is finalized, Mr. Winham will email out to members.

Mr. Chartrand, recognizing the prerogative of the PB to not recommend the placement of the amendment on the ballot, would like to prepare a citizens' petition to have the proposed amendment appear on the 2016 ballot. Mr. Dean noted the period for submission is between November 9 and December 9; the 9th being only 1 day after the scheduled December 8 EEDC meeting. Discussion followed on the potential risks of the possibility of two similar amendments on the ballot; an article with the language possibly modified through its hearings before the PB and then an article not having the same language. Mr. Chartrand asked for advice as he felt this is something that should not wait another full year before being voted upon.

The question of the interpretation of the TIF amendment was raised. Mr. Chartrand felt he had a more liberal interpretation that would include mixed use development in that corridor; not limited to industrial or commercial development only.

Mr. Dean suggested scheduling another meeting, with a quorum, to discuss the feasibility to offer up a citizens' petition. This would allow some time to evaluate such a plan.

Mr. Winham weighed in saying he doesn't feel the language would change from its first public hearing before the PB and the second hearing as it is being crafted by a professional, Mr. Greenwood. He added there are other projects out on Epping Road that would benefit from such a change.

Discussion determined that a brief presentation be made at the November 19th PB and then try to gauge the Board's predisposition on moving the amendment ahead. A decision can then be made on scheduling a special meeting (of EEDC) to consider drafting a citizens' petition. Such a petition requires the signatures of 25 residents but the EEDC could be the initiator.

Mr. Winham continued referencing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program offered by the Rockingham Economic Development Corporation. By submitting a proposal and getting on the Priority Project list there is the opportunity to receive funding from the funds given to RECD by the US Development Authority. It noted it is a very comprehensive and competitive process but the Town's project entitled the Epping Road Development Initiative is on Priority List. Reading from the text of the proposal he stated this is an opportunity to receive funding for other infrastructure improvements in the Epping Road corridor not covered in the original TIF ordinance. He outlined the steps needed to proceed but if anything is added to the TIF it does need citizens' approval.

The Budget Recommendation Committee has approved \$35,000 for a downtown parking study as submitted as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

Mr. Windham spoke to the 79-E provision passed as a historic tax incentive program but each town through its governing body needs to determine how to utilize the program. The Selectboard is seeking such a recommendation from the Historic District Commission (HDC). Mr. Windham at their November 18th meeting is presenting how he feels this program could be used. Legal counsel has drafted a template for consideration by the HDC and then approval by the Selectboard...

The acquisition of NH DOT property on the corner of Holland Way/.Hampton Road is moving forward with the BOS preempting the process by advocating the sale to a private party (basically saying to the State we as a Town do not wish the "surplus property"; it may be sold to a private interest.) A committee of the DOT will be meeting this coming week and Mr. Winham, State Senator Prescott and a member of the Selectboard will be attending.

Mr. Winham is working with a company wishing to locate to Exeter and build a 105,000 sq. ft. facility on Continental Drive property owned by Mr. Monahan. The project's first appearance will be at the Dec 10, 2015 Planning Board session.

- **Next Meeting**
Members will be advised of any special meeting following the November 19th Planning Board meeting. At this time the next scheduled meeting is December 8, 2015
- **Approval of Minutes** Tabled to a future meeting
- **Motion to adjourn** So moved by Mr. Chartrand; seconded by Mr. Dean.
Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Recording secretary