

APPROVED MINUTES

Exeter Economic Development Commission

May 10, 2016

Present: Madeleine Hamel, Lizabeth MacDonald-Vice Chair, Dan Chartrand, Ian Smith, Brian Lortie, Darren Winham- Economic Development Director and Russell Dean-Town Manager. Also present were Doug Eastman-Town Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Director, Dave Sharples-Town Planner.

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:38 by Lizabeth MacDonald.
2. **Discussion of Meeting Day/Time of EDC:** Dan Chartrand stated he would like to see the meeting date and time change. Stating a lot of the committee members were professionals and younger. He felt evenings would be more accommodating to their schedule. Ian Smith agreed. After discussion the consensus was to change the day to the 4th Tues of the month at 7:00 p.m. Liz MacDonald will send out an email to the group.
3. **Approve Minutes – March 8, 2016 and April 12, 2016:** Russ Dean stated the March minutes were not ready. Madeleine Hamel made a motion to approve the minutes of April 12, 2016 as submitted by Grace Rogers and seconded by Ian Smith.
4. **Financial Report – Brian Lortie:** Brian Lortie stated the balance in the account was \$7,100.00 with no activity.
5. **EDSP Sessions Updates and 6. Economic Development Project updates:** Darren Winham mentioned he gave a Power Point Presentation to the Rotary Club the previous day, May 9, 2016 and it was well received. Today Darren updated the EDC on the presentation he gave at last month's meeting. The updates included:
 - The public meetings that have already taken place were very well attended. What came out of the Downtown Meeting was that Exeter needs something to bring people to Exeter and stay in Exeter. There needs to be some sort of attraction to the downtown area. Exeter does not have that other than the businesses and restaurants that Exeter currently has. The notion that came up was utilizing and investing in the Exeter Town Hall. One idea was to use the Town Hall as a Cultural Center bringing in a subcontractor professional to run things. Madeleine Hamel stated that what was also brought up at the meeting was to have a green space for people to set possibly by the Bandstand, making that whole area downtown as a focal point. This could be done by breaking up the asphalt area and getting rid of the current parking spaces with lawn for seating. Dan Chartrand thought it was a brilliant idea sacrificing a little bit of parking to create a place set aside for pedestrians.

- The upcoming public meetings:
 - Holland Way/Hampton Road Wednesday, May 18
 - Kingston Road Wednesday, June 1

EPPING ROAD: Darren updated the committee on the Epping Road projects. They are looking at a very large project on Mr. Shafmaster’s property that Darren feels would be very well received by the community. They are digging test pits on a parcel of Mr. Shafmaster which shows how serious they are. Currently Mr. Shafmaster allows mountain bikers, walkers and hikers to use all of his trails on his property. If the company that would relocate and employ 30 workers does go in Mr. Shafmaster will reroute the trails. They will also be willing to donate an entire day of their workers in assisting the Town to reroute the trails.

Mark King is moving forward with his storage units.

Darren met with the TIF advisory board to see if there is a way to assist with funding with the TIF infrastructure. The TIF infrastructure would be water and sewer from Continental Drive to its end, to and through Route 101 and build a road across Mr. Shafmaster’s property onto Mr. Carlisle’s property with water and sewer as well. The TIF advisory board discussed allowing a pre funding mechanism that wouldn’t cost the taxpayers anything or any risks. It would allow a developer to pay for the development structure within the TIF that we wouldn’t otherwise be able to fund within the TIF that is in place now. The TIF advisory board makes its recommendation, the BOS then makes a decision and if they decide if it’s a good mechanism then that can be in place. Lizabeth MacDonald asked Darren if the pre funding piece would involve a bond and if so would there be a vote? Russ Dean said he would have to check out the language to determine that.

Mr. Baker, who had a Purchase and Sales Agreement on Mr. King’s 63 acres, has allowed it to expire. Mr. King is actively seeking other options. Darren wanted to bring attention to this slide. It states that Mr. King’s 63 acre parcel, which is in current use, pays \$108.65 per year in property taxes. A homeowner who has a home on .25 +/- valued at \$300,000 pay \$7,662. The Town wants to see some development on the 63 acres for potential revenue for the Town.



Gourmet Gift Baskets, which is located on Mr. Monahan’s property, and the F W Webb expansion are both moving forward and going well.

80 Epping Road is moving forward with building their garden style apartments.

LINCOLN STREET: There are multiple properties on Lincoln Street that are available for sale and development. Lots of potential.

Lexi's Burger Joint is moving forward and has started renovations where Karma Kafe was located on Lincoln Street.

DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR: Darren showed a couple of slides comparing the property value between downtown and Portsmouth Avenue. The per acre value of non-town owned property is 2.15 million while the per acre value on Portsmouth Avenue is \$640,000. This shows a lot of quality property in the downtown area. Darren pointed out there is a 4.4% vacancy rate in the downtown which is very good, extremely healthy.

Darren gave kudos to Public Works/Highway Department for the excellent job they are doing on the sidewalk project. Dan Chartrand stated he has spoken to many downtown merchants and they are extremely happy with the way the Highway Department and Bell & Flynn have accommodated the merchant's needs. The merchants are over joyed and said it has been a dream project.

Russ Dean stated the sidewalk project is just the start of more things to come as far as upcoming projects in Town. The dam is being removed July/August. String Bridge is going to be rehabilitated this summer. There is going to be a major paving effort in the downtown. Russ Dean stated he and Dave Sharples have been walking through areas in the downtown to see where there could be improvements. They have been looking at Founders Park and different spaces. Founders Park is a potentially great scenic area and a stopping place. Founders Park could use a face lift and then some and do a lot of different things with it.

Lizabeth MacDonald asked what thoughts have been given on cycling through town. Russ Dean said they have looked at bicycle paths and complete streets approaches in the areas of Portsmouth Avenue and Lincoln Street. The downtown is more difficult due to the parking issues. Maybe strategically placing more bicycle racks in the downtown with signage encouraging them to park and walk around the downtown area, is an option. They would need to eliminate angle parking on both sides of the street in order to make room for bicycles. Angle parking is a safety issue for bicyclists. Darren mentioned that at every meeting he has attended people have brought up bicycling.

PORTSMOUTH AVENUE: Darren stated the meeting on Portsmouth Avenue was not as well attended but he didn't think it would be because of the fact it's kind of built out. A count was done on curb cuts and there are 28 curb cuts on the west side and 22 curb cuts on the east side.

Darren spoke with representatives from Osram about a number of initiatives on their parcels.

Darren identified parcels for development, not redevelopment, 4 total: 1) the former Rogans Bakery owned by Todd Baker, 2) a yellow house near the Hampton Inn, 3) the former Getty's Station owned by the Murphy brothers 4) 7.73 acres owned by John Salin by McDonalds off Stoneybrook Ext.

Master Plan Steering Committee/EEDC Role in Master Plan: Darren stated they are holding public meetings, gathering data and starting to write the EDSP Strategic Plan. Darren reminded everyone that all these sessions are on line and can be seen by going to Town Hall Streams. They can also read Dave Sharples fact sheets and view the maps as well as the questionnaires on line. Darren encouraged everyone to fill out the questionnaires on all of the six (6) corridors.

Dave Sharples stated the Master Plan is on schedule with the timeline given at last month's EEDC meeting. They have created the Master Plan Steering Committee. There are 20 current members. They are waiting for an appointment from the Heritage Commission and SAU. Making the committee a potential 22 member board. The first meeting will be finalized today tentatively set for next week in the evening. Dave will send out an email once the date is finalized. Dan Chartrand asked who the EEDC representative is. Dave replied none so far, one will have to be named. Dave said he will check with the Planning Board to see who is needed for the members since they appoint them. Dan also asked Dave once the public meeting dates have been set if he could send a schedule of them to the EEDC. Dave said he would.

6. **Upcoming Events/Events Recap – All Boards Meeting June 15, 2016:** Russ Dean wanted to put the meeting date on the agenda in order to have couple EEDC representatives attend. Dan Chartrand mentioned he will be away for that meeting but he encouraged other board member to attend. Russ stated it is the reconvening of the group that met back in February. The group had been charged with the different boards and committees on what they had been charged with. One was looking at the budgetary needs as far as training goes for development and things. Things needing to be done in those regards. Selectwoman Julie Gilman is coordinating that effort with the different chairs of the different boards. Communication needs to go back to her that's how it can be done.

Russ mentioned the BOS goal setting session. One item was developing a more cohesive marketing plan for the Town. Elizabeth MacDonald asked what directs the message you are using to market? Does that get generated by the Master Plan? Russ replied a couple of things; we have to determine the marketing on what is it about Exeter that will bring businesses in and what process do we have in place for businesses to apply and what our process is.

7. **Economic Development Projects at other Board Meetings:**

- Planning Board:
 - On May 12, 2016 there is an application for a 8,000 sq ft professional office building off Windsor Lane

- Zoning Board of Adjustment:
 - Meeting of May 17, 2016 they will be addressing two variances; 1 residential, 1 non residential
- Conservation Commission:
 - Meeting May 10, 2016 on the Allen Street property inspection follow up
 - Neighborhood rain garden meeting on May 21, 2016
 - River clean up suggested for early to mid-July 2016
 - National Trails Day coming up June 4, 2016
- Historic District Commission/Heritage Commission:
 - Meeting on May 19, 2016 will be addressing new signage for Seacoast Art Association Gallery
 - Continued public hearing on wireless communication on the roof at 24 Front Street
- Select Board:
 - No update

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m. **Next meeting May 24, 2016 at 7:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Grace Rogers