

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:05 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town office Building. Members present were: Lizabeth MacDonald, Brandon Stauber, Kathy Corson, Len Benjamin, Brian Lortie, Madeleine Hamel, Selectman Dan Chartrand and Town Manager Russ Dean. Also in attendance: Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock and interns Tom Lamb and Betsy Bilharz.

2. Approval of minutes

In reviewing the minutes for August 14, 2012, Mr. Stauber noted on page 1, the “engine” referenced was the (*content management*) engine that allowed for the flexibility of web site. With that correction, Ms. MacDonald motioned to approve; seconded by Mr. Stauber. Motion carried with Ms. Corson, Mr. Lortie, Mr. Chartrand and Mr. Benjamin abstaining. Ms. Hamel was not present for the vote

Before starting the discussion/action items on the meeting agenda, Mr. Sandberg asked the members to take a moment in remembrance of the victims, their families and the heroes from the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

3. Discussion/Action Items

• ***Business Retention and Expansion***

Ms. Bilharz, restating the request from Ms. Hamel and the work group for her to look at the business data base to determine if some economic analysis could be derived. A prepared printout was distributed detailing how she proceeded. Four questions were posed:

1. What are the major industries in each commercial district

Five commercial districts were identified and within each the district:

- a. the industry category
- b. number of
- c. % of total business within that Commercial District

A summary provided of the data displayed for each of the commercial districts was provided.

2. What are the major industries in each zone?

Fourteen zones were identified and within each of the zones:

- a. the industry category
- b. number of
- c. % of total business in Zone

A commentary on the data represented in the charts followed for each of the different Zones. (Ms. von Aulock later suggested enclosing a map denoting the zones)

3. What are the major industries in Exeter?

A total of 585 businesses were categorized by:

- a. the industry category
- b. number of
- c. % of total business in Exeter

The summary stressed the results are based on the numbers of businesses in each industry and do not take into account the size and employment information.

4. What businesses/industries employ the most people?

Table was sorted by descending number of employees

- a. Business name
- b. Industry
- c. Number of Employees

The number of employees displayed in the chart is based on estimates provided by the web site manta.com and the data presented is only a generalized-range based on this business directory. It appears the Health and Medical industry is the largest employer, The Academy (Community & Education) second and Riverwoods at Exeter (Housing) ranks third.

Detailed discussion followed Ms. Bilharz's report regarding the breakdown of the categories, a more-in-depth look at existing business to see what is actually present than what is perceived, the need for more accurate employment numbers and clusters of businesses within zones; would there be an opportunity to promote those services to serve/support existing businesses. Also, job training and the cost to employers and are these employees living in Town and using the existing businesses and services or living outside the Town because of cost of living in-town.

Ms. Hamel remarked on the mixed use zones permitted in this Town and the advantage they offer. As for the expansion of mixed use zoning, Ms. Corson commented on the Zoning Ordinance and Review Committee's (ZORC) plan to change the C2 zone along Portsmouth Avenue (from High St. to Walgreen's) to C1 to permit the owners to develop/max out their property. She has asked Ms. Bilharz to look at those businesses along that route to corroborate the zoning change. Something similar will most likely occur over on the Epping Road by Al's Automotive Services.

Mr. Chartrand asked if the SAU 16 and Cooperative School employees were listed in the Education business category as he feels Education is the prime industry of Exeter and the numbers listed do not seem to reflect an actual number. Ms. Hamel agreed to contact the SAU 16 office.

Mr. Chartrand also suggested Jane Jacob's book The Death and Life of Great American Cities as the author looks at the importance of diversity within the community and how mixed use districts work and their viability.

Mr. Sandberg felt a definition of the categories would be helpful; perhaps an addendum. Ms. Corson agreed but added their definitions in this report aren't the same as in the zoning ordinances; need to mesh in some way before any zoning changes can occur.

Mr. Sandberg asked the members to go back and read the summary and to bring back questions to the subcommittee. Also asked Ms. Hamel to update with the school information and identify what resources are needed to bring to the next level; perhaps a resource to provide an analysis from this information. What are the intended next steps.

Ms. Hamel replied they did plan to share the report with Board of Selectmen and other Departments. It was also envisioned to serve as a working tool for the other EEDC subcommittees and in the development of the Economic Development chapter for the Town Master Plan.

Mr. Dean commented a goal of the BOS was to have a joint meeting of the EEDC and the PB to talk about strategies and non-resident tax basis. When that will occur is dependent when all feel prepared with the information needed to have an in-depth discussion; with the refinements suggested this will be an excellent document to bring to the table. With Ms. Corson's suggestion to include ZORC in the discussion, Mr. Dean suggested perhaps it be a roundtable discussion. He also suggested the

Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC), the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) and the NH Center for Public Policy as possible resources for the economic analysis desired by Ms. Hamel.

The Chair thanked Ms. Hamel and her work group for the report and the members present for their input and a most interesting discussion. Ms. Bilharz and Mr. Lamb were acknowledged for their research put in to the report.

Ms. Hamel also reported the subcommittee is preparing to embark on the next round of business and property owner visitations with the focus being on the Epping Road and the ER Zone. A letter is being prepared for mailing later this month; will be looking for volunteers as they have lost members on the subcommittee. Ms. von Aulock added to be mindful the ER Zone is a State program and not to give the impression it is a Town initiative. Ms. Hamel stressed these are introductory visits and an official from DRED may be invited if the committee feels it would be beneficial for a particular business to have official representation to explain the program in more detail.

- ***Branding and Marketing***
Materials in development/web site

Mr. Lamb started his web site presentation noting the consultants for the project, aHa, provided a list of add ons for the Town to consider as they prepared the site; one being a business directory. Mr. Lamb felt with the present data base it might want to be considered. The distributed handout had the costs associated with such as directory with him doing the input and a cost with the consultant preparing the directory. (The cost for the consultant to provide the directory module remains the same; the input fee is eliminated with Mr. Lamb doing the input).

Discussion followed on the pros and cons of having such a feature on the Town site with the questions of i.e. maintenance, favoritism being cited. Mr. Stauber, chairman of the Branding and Marketing subcommittee said it was discussed at a meeting and they were not in favor of having such a feature; was of low priority at this time.

Mr. Dean added this is a module available from the consultants and can be implemented at any time the Town decides to do so.

After further discussion on programming, maintenance and costs, Ms. Corson made the motion to table the discussion on adding a Business Directory to the EEDC page on Town website until website is up and running; seconded by Mr. Chartrand. Calling for a vote, motion passed. The Chairman acknowledged it can be kept as a future resource. Mr. Lamb was thanked for bringing that feature to the attention of the Commission.

Ms. Corson in an effort to re-affirm the value of Mr. Lamb to the EEDC and to not lose the continuity gained made the motion to extend the contract for the intern; discussion followed on length, hours and hourly rate. Mr. Dean interjected this was a personnel matter and this meeting was not the arena for discussion; will talk with Chairman off line. It was noted if there are funds to be expended from the EEDC treasury for an intern contract it will be brought back to the full Commission for approval. There was no second for Ms. Corson's motion.

Ms. Bilharz continued the discussion on website development and what she has been working on since the last meeting. The format remains basically the same but content is being tweaked and attempting to make the site more interactive. They are also working on how to spotlight businesses and the success stories without "advertising" or showing preferential treatment. In order to have a uniform content it was suggested to advertise for businesses to respond to *Why Exeter?* as a means to

solicit testimonials for the web page. (A printed sample page from another town web site was distributed)

Mr. Stauber added the subcommittee wants to highlight the variety and depth of businesses located in Town; why they chose Exeter and why they choose to stay. From a pool of businesses they will have the ability to modify the site so as to have constantly changing business profiles.

Ms. Bilharz continued noting this is considered an add-on to the present contract and has a cost of \$300. Mr. Stauber made the motion to expend \$300.00 from the EEDC treasury for this feature; seconded by Ms. Corson. In discussion on the motion, Ms. von Aulock wasn't sure what the EEDC would get; thought it was a good opportunity to work with Ms. Hamel's business data base for this feature.

Mr. Stauber explained the cost is for a piece of code (a "slider" in web terms) that takes information from the data base (the *Why Exeter?* data base) and pulls from that pool those businesses to be displayed on the EEDC page in Business section of web site.

Mr. Dean felt it was an idea worth pursuing but cautioned that it would need to pass the liability test. He would not want the Town to be held liable for statements made in the company testimonials; would need to develop some form of waiver.

Ms. MacDonald expressed her concern on developing a framework for selecting the businesses to be represented.

Mr. Stauber stated the intent is not to use the categories represented in the prepared data base but to come up with marketing categories more appropriate to marketing of the Town; to get a more of a narrative of what is going on in the Town. And he agreed with the inclusion of a disclaimer and noted the selection (of the businesses) will start with those represented in the surveys but will ultimately be opened up to all and with standard language in the app form they will be able to edit the information provided by the businesses.

Mr. Sandberg, noting the original motion was posed by Mr. Stauber and seconded by Ms. Corson, asked Mr. Stauber if he was willing to continue the motion with the proviso for Town Counsel to review the proposal to include a liability clause and to find a process for businesses to submit their information. Mr. Stauber agreed and Ms. Corson reaffirmed her second. With no further discussion, the Chair called for a vote. Motion carried.

- **Organization and Capacity Building**

With time restraints noted, Mr. Lortie was asked to postpone his presentation

- 4 **Review of 2011/2012 Goals/action plan**

Tabled until next meeting.

- 5 **Seacoast Business Expo**

Ms. Corson reported the 2012 Seacoast Business Expo, sponsored by the Seacoast Chamber Alliance, will be held October 18, 2012 at the UNH Field House from 4 to 7 pm. It is an opportunity for networking with the public and members from the six Seacoast Chambers. As a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization, the EEDC may reserve for a \$215.00 fee an exhibit table and two staffing people; additional staff will be assessed a \$12.00 fee. Ms. Corson felt it was an excellent opportunity to get the EEDC out there and promote what they are doing. Having participated in similar events, Ms. MacDonald provided additional details in how an expo operates.

Agreeing it was a great opportunity, Mr. Stauber moved for the EEDC to sponsor a table (\$215.00) and the fees associated with those members staffing the table and “circulators” and a small operating budget (\$100.00) for preparing marketing materials and the giveaways often associated with such events. Motion seconded by Ms. Corson. Mr. Chartrand asked the question be called. With that, the motion passed. Mr. Stauber offered to have the Marketing and Branding subcommittee start on the organization of an exhibit and marketing materials for the event.

6. Town updates/announcements

Mr. Dean:

- a) Bilharz is continuing to work on TIF information.
- b) He has been in contact with Laurel Bistany of the REDC and hopes to have her at next meeting and determine how this Commission may interface with her group.
- c) At the invitation of Chamber president Mike Schidlovsky, he attended a meeting at Cobham with company officials. Mr. Eastman was also present at the ribbon-cutting event along with 300+ dignities/CEOs at the start of the 105,000 sq. ft. expansion project. The Town is establishing a presence and has made itself available for any assistance needed.
- d) He is cognizant of the desire and need for continuing EEDC assistance and warrants further discussion. It is almost budget time for initial budget requests so this would be a good time to initiate any talks. (Mr. Sandberg agreed to make it an agenda item for October)

Ms. von Aulock spoke of the change potentially coming to the site of the vacant concrete block building near the Town pool and playground on the Exeter Road for a Alzheimer’s/memory care facility; will be presenting application to ZBA. She is very excited as it will change the fabric of that corner.

7. Next meeting: October 9, 2012

As for suggested agenda items, Mr. Stauber asked for a formal discussion on the Exeter/Stratham Water Study and the economic development impacts of providing Stratham with Town services vies the property tax rate. Mr. Dean and Mr. Chartrand remarked the study is on the Town web site and comments are being solicited; suggested posting his questions on line. The comments will be coming from both Exeter and Stratham and are being collected and tabulated by the RPC; comment period is opened until Sept. 21, 2012.

As for Form Based Codes, Ms. von Aulock is submitting a budget request for a consultant to look at the Portsmouth Ave. corridor to develop language for adoption of; possibly a discussion item for next meeting.

8. General announcements

Ms. Bilharz announced she will be leaving her position with the EEDC and wished to thank the Commission for the opportunity to work with the group. Mr. Sandberg thanked her and Mr. Lamb for all their work on behalf of the Commission and the great strides made over the summer.

Ms. Hamel reported on a meeting scheduled for October 13, 2012 at the Portsmouth Sheraton Harborside on the Economic Impact of the Arts; based on an art and economic survey in the Portsmouth area.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Chartrand moved to adjourned; seconded by Ms. Corson. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Raub
Recording Secretary