

Exeter Economic Development Commission

October 9, 2012

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:07 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town office building. Members present were Selectman Dan Chartrand, Kathy Corson, Len Benjamin, Brian Lortie and Madeleine Hamel. Also in attendance: Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, intern Tom Lamb and Selectman Don Clement.

Mr. Sandberg welcomed Mr. David Hampson as the newest member of the EEDC. Before the members introduced themselves, the Chair briefly outlined the structure of the Commission for Mr. Hampson. Following the introductions, Mr. Hampson added he grew up in Exeter, left for a period of time but returned in 2007 and presently manages the Exeter branch of the Cross Insurance Agency on Center Street. He does have an interest, a vested interest in the economic development of the Town but feels it is important to proceed in a strategic manner to promote growth while preserving the historic aspect of the Town.

Continuing, Mr. Sandberg outlined the three standing work groups and their tasks and accomplishments to date. He will confer with Mr. Hampson to learn where his interests lie and which group he would like to join.

2. Approval of minutes

Ms. Corson moved to accept the draft minutes of the September 11, 2012 meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Benjamin. Motion carried with Mr. Hampson abstaining.

3. Discussion/Action Items

▪ **Intern report**

Mr. Lamb announced this was to be his last meeting with the EEDC as his internship is complete. In discussing the possibility of obtaining another intern from UNH he felt it being in the middle of the academic semester that might not be possible. However at the beginning of the 2013 academic semester there may be a better possibility of securing a candidate.

Mr. Sandberg thanked him for his great work on behalf of the Commission and wished him well in future ventures. The Chair will confer with the Town Manager on the possibility of securing an individual for assistance for the remainder of the year but definitely for the start of the 2013 academic year.

▪ **Branding and Marketing work group**

In the absence of the Chair for the subcommittee, Ms. Corson noted she will combine the reports to include the report on the UNH Business Expo to be held on October 18, 2012 at the UNH Field House from 4 – 7 pm. The EEDC did submit the required fees for a table and four members to attend; Ms. von Aulock, Mr. Eastman, Ms. Corson and Ms. Hamel.

A prepared printout was circulated of the material to be displayed on a trifold display board. The three panels are designed to highlight Exeter: Open for Business since 1638, Success Stories (profile of four representative businesses in the Town) and Exeter Town Services (those facilities/departments supporting Town businesses).

Discussion followed on the materials presented and other handouts, brochures to be available for the attendees to take. Mr. Chartrand is donating a gift certificate to the Water St. Bookstore and the Chamber is also contributing a gift certificate. Ms. von Aulock stressed the display is a “bulleted”

look at Exeter; to get people to come into the booth and then if more specific questions are asked can direct to web site or have the appropriate Town representative follow up.

Reaction to the materials was most favorable with Mr. Chartrand noting it demonstrates Exeter is a high service Town which is most important to businesses.

The Chair thanked Mr. Benjamin, Mr. Stauber, Ms. Corson and Ms. von Aulock of the Branding and Marketing subcommittee for assembling the material; was confident it would be very helpful.

▪ **Business Retention work group**

Ms. Hamel reported at a September 20th meeting of the work group there was further review of the Exeter business and property *data* base prepared by interns Mr. Lamb and Ms. Bilharz and distributed and discussed at the September EEDC meeting. From that discussion, the report was modified to better reflect the business profile of the community: broad definitions i.e. retail were separated out. Also incorporated into the document was Exeter zoning definitions and consideration for subdividing some major industries i.e. healthcare into separate categories to better highlight and aid in targeting new businesses.

Mr. Lamb confirmed he had the revised document and it was agreed to electronically provide members with a copy of the report. Again, the need for maintenance of the data base was raised and Mr. Lamb reported it was an Excel/Word document and probably would only need to be addressed perhaps twice a month as businesses close, new businesses enter Town and employment numbers change: Mr. Sandberg will confer with Mr. Dean on the question.

- Continuing, she noted the next letter of introduction is to be sent primarily to businesses with an Epping Road address was reviewed at the meeting. (To provide Mr. Hampson with some background on the work the group Ms. Hamel reviewed the activities and accomplishments of the subcommittee over the past months.) Ms. Corson added with the loss of several members to this subcommittee it is hindering the remaining members (Ms. Corson, Ms. Hamel and Ms. Gilman) from moving forward scheduling appointments and conducting the visits. Again, additional help would be appreciated

▪ **Organization and Capacity Building**

Mr. Lortie, chairman of this subcommittee also serves as the Treasurer for the Commission. He stated he did not have a financial report for the period ending in September because the bank statements did not arrive in a timely manner. It was agreed he would electronically send out the financial statement to the members.

Mr. Sandberg noted the Economic Development chapter for the Town Master Plan is on hold at this time.

The tax and property data base has been expanded and refined with the assistance of Mr. Lamb but again the issue how it will be updated and maintained was raised. Mr. Sandberg will pursue.

4. Town Updates

- Ms. von Aulock spoke of the Planning Board being ready to hear two proposed zoning amendments. One pertains to elderly housing and definitions of; the second will be the work of a subcommittee and their review/analysis of Portsmouth Avenue. It is a two-phased proposal and they are ready for phase one looking at Portsmouth Avenue from High St. to Walgreens and the fundamental districts. She feels it is a comprehensive analysis and would be willing to give a short presentation at the November meeting. Mr. Sandberg felt it was a timely topic and agreed to schedule such for the next meeting.
- The Chair, reading from Mr. Dean's notes, noted the comment period for the Exeter/Stratham Water and Sewer draft report was closed and all comments have been received and being reviewed by the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC). Incorporating the comments received the consultants will prepare a formal report and outline what will be the next steps. Mr. Clement added more information should be available by the November meeting.
- Ms. von Aulock reported on Exeter participating in a 2 year study, in a collaboration of multiple agencies under the direction of NH Listens, from UNH will focus on Exeter and how its citizens will deal with climate change. Following an approval from the BOS the group will establish small group meetings for discussion on what are the concerns of climate change and how it will affect their everyday lives.

As to why Exeter was chosen, it was determined we are a town with tidal influence and Mr. Clement added the Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee has a comprehensive data base of the River from studies completed over a number of years. It also was indicative there are a number of active groups in place with the capacity to assist in the study.

Mr. Chartrand did confirm there will be a role for the EEDC as the study gets under way. More will be discussed at November meeting

- Ms. Corson reported on a parade being set for October 13, 2012 for Victoria Arlen, Paralympic swimmer medalist at the Paralympic Games in London this past summer. An Exeter resident and student at EHS Victoria will be honored with a parade through Town ending with a ceremony at Swasey Parkway attended by a number of dignitaries.
- Mr. Eastman brought up a preliminary report sent to him and Ms. von Aulock by the Town Manager on the demographics of the Town and the number of elderly tax (property tax) exemption available to the residents if they so qualify for the exemption. Discussion continued on the aging population of NH and Mr. Clement added Exeter has the largest population of elders in this area of the State that qualify for this exemption. It was agreed it was a subject for further discussion; will confer with Mr. Dean.

5. Review of 2011/2012 Goals/action plan

The Chair distributed a four-page prepared printout of the EEDC Action Plan adopted following the September 2011 Visioning Session; revised in October 2011. Also for review, a copy of the present charge for the EEDC, the presentation on the intent, means and projects given the BOS on September 26,

2011 and the last page outlined the Action Plans by a timeline; the next 120 days, next 18 months and for next 3 years. Mr. Sandberg asked the members to take the document and review as the work plan for 2013 is developed. Is there to be a shift in the focus of the group; is the present work plan of meet and greet and introduction of EEDC to be an ongoing mission? Are there pieces of the action plan to be revised? More time will be devoted for discussion at November meeting as the action plan is developed for 2013.

Ms. Hamel noted the names of the Commission members supporting the listed tasks need to be updated as the group has lost some key members. Ms. von Aulock, noting the task of developing a chapter for Master Plan, suggested the Commission might want to consider a dollar amount be placed into the budget for hiring a consultant to assist in the development of such a chapter. Further discussion ensued on using the remaining dollars in this year's budget towards applying for a grant for project assistance but stressed time is of the essence as unused dollars are returned to general fund. It was also unclear what amount was submitted for the Commissions 2013 budget. Mr. Sandberg will follow up.

- Mr. Eastman announced he had met with a new company coming to Exeter from Maryland. They manufacture medical components for neonatal units. They will be located in an existing building on Industrial Way and anticipate having an initial workforce of about 10. As to why they chose Exeter, Mr. Eastman understood an official at DRED steered them this way.

6. Next Meeting November 13, 2012

Mr. Sandberg reviewed the topics for further discussion at November meeting; follow up on Exeter/Stratham water and sewer study, presentation by Ms. von Aulock of proposed zoning changes to Portsmouth Ave., environmental and climate change focus groups and the Action Plan for 2013.

7. Adjournment

With no further business, the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. So moved by Mr. Benjamin; seconded by Mr. Chartrand.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 am

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub
Recording Secretary