

FINAL MINUTES

Exeter Economic Development Commission

March 28, 2017

Present: Lizabeth MacDonald-Chair, Don Clement-Selectman Rep, Darren Winham- Economic Development Director, Ian Smith, Madeline Hamel, John Mueller, Dan Gutstein, Kelly Bergeron, Jason Proulx and Russ Dean, Town Manager.

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:07 by Lizabeth MacDonald.

2. **Approve Minutes** – February 28, 2017

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved to approve the February 28, 2017 minutes, Ms. Bergeron seconded. Jason Proulx and Mr. Gutstein abstained. Motion passed 5-2.

3. **Town Election:** Mr. Dean discussed the warrant articles that passed at the town election. Items passed with high percentages. This shows that the program is working.

4. **Update on the Master Plan Steering Committee:** Mr. Smith attended the meeting on March 9, there are documents posted on the planning department's website and these documents are great. There are wonderful summaries that were provided in these documents. Mr. Clement said this document is data rich, and he agreed the summaries were great. There also should be a second follow up meeting at some point in the future. Mr. Clement said they have a good approach and they were extremely pleased with the public turnout. Mr. Dean said there were two things that jumped out at him, the whole process has been really value added, and there are diverse thoughts on economic development. Also, there is sometimes problems between planning and conservation goals and they recommended that they have discussions and work forward on issues together. Ms. Hamel said that that they talked about using graphics and photos going forward so the document will be very readable and usable. Also, the interesting part is the categories are impressive. What the community came up with as positive things happening in Exeter now and what they would like to see in the future was excellent. Ms. Hamel also felt that in today's world, mobility was important and how now we should think about how to market Exeter more online to encourage people from all over to include Exeter in their travel plans. The next meeting is the week of April 10th. There is a poll out now to finalize the date.

5. **TIF Advisory Board & its vote regarding allowing a developer to front the "carry" on a TIF bond**

Payment: Mr. Winham said this is interesting, the Board approved this notion and this was presented to the Planning Board. Mr. Winham spoke with Mr. Shafmaster today, and it was discussed that instead of him just paying the carry they are looking at the possibility that Mr. Shafmaster would build a road to the town's specifications and simply pay this with a contract to the town. He would do the infrastructure all the way up to the where the road would be and then build the road. He is interested in doing this and is working with Mr. Donahue and the town attorney to draft something on this. He would appear before the Selectboard with this sometime soon.

5. **Economic Development Project Updates:** Mr. Winham said that on Epping Road, Gift Baskets is now up and running. Mr. Winham discussed a building on Continental Building that is about

100,000 square foot building. The owner is currently not building on this site because he needs a light on the property and the town cannot currently build this. He has closed the property but his plans for it are on hold due to this issue right now. Mr. Winham hopes to work towards solving this issue soon by going through all the proper channels and applying. The Sports Complex is still on track, and has grown a little bit. They a young couple, chiropractors, that are looking at the Kings parcel. They have funding and should be moving in soon. Seadog has a continued public hearing for the 79E with the Selectboard, no decision was made because this was our first application on this and the Selectboard only had three members in attendance. Ms. MacDonald asked what they were asking for with 79E. Mr. Winham explained that a district is created in Exeter's case it is historic and downtown. To qualify you have to be doing a substantial rehabilitation or replacement of a historic property. However long the incentive lasts, 100% of the difference between what the base tax is and what the completed assessed value is that difference is not paid. You can add years to this by meeting certain criteria. Ms. MacDonald felt that once these starts happening it creates a lot of other folks downtown to clean up their facades. Mr. Dean felt this 79E was doing what was intended, the likelihood of getting a few more of these once word is out is likely. It encourages investment in properties. Mr. Dean also explained that the covenant is an agreement on what goes into the building as part of the application is what remains. There are legal protections built in for the town. Mr. Winham explained this first application would end up being the template for other applications. Mr. Gutstein asked if the one residential unit would work to their advantage, and Mr. Winham said yes, but the Selectboard get to decide all of these factors. Mr. Clement felt the point of the 79E is that if they are granted the 79E, they will have more ability to invest in their properties. Mr. Winham wanted to be clear that these applicants are not paying 0 taxes, they are waiting on paying the increased taxes if approved. Mr. Proulx asked who determines the public benefit, it was confirmed the Selectboard does, in this case the applicant has made a case for four. This will be appearing before the Selectboard again on April 10th.

Mr. Winham said the Exeter Sport and Bungalow Club is moving forward. The Salt Cave going into the former orange leaf space. The George and Phillips space, they have met with 5 different companies and they spoke with Unitil today about the power lines etc. Mr. Winham is working with the owner of 23 Water Street on a new build project. For Lincoln Street, he is working with developers on a potentially very large project. On Kingston Road, he was approached about a for charrette workforce housing project. There is a 94-acre property and he is looking to develop multifamily in the front and single family in the back. On Portsmouth Ave, they have a company that is looking to build on the former shell station. Mr. Winham is working on the economic development strategy, he is working with a couple of interns who have done some good work. Mr. Winham is going to need some help with some of the EDA application and the website. He wanted to know if the Board would part with \$2000, so the interns could stay on throughout the summer. Mr. Dean wanted to discuss Mr. Winham role because he is getting comments about his work with residential. Mr. Winham explained that he works on residential projects that have commercial components, if it is strictly residential he does not work on it. Ms. MacDonald said her personal opinion is that they may have an issue today but she does not feel it is completely divorced from what they are doing. Mr. Smith certainly hoped that the Economic Develop Manager, Town Manager and other departments are working together and being involved on how everything works together. This causes him to believe Mr. Winham would be very involved in projects that have

workforce housing or multi uses. Mr. Clement said that all the development is wonderful but it can't get ahead of the town infrastructure. The Housing Committee Report was discussed at length and a presentation should be made soon to the Selectboard.

MOTION: Mr. Gutstein moved to approve the \$2000 to be utilized for interns, Ms. Hamel seconded. The motion passed. Mr. Clement abstained. The motion passed.

Mr. Winham said that citizens have come to him about their concerns about traffic and parking in relation to the Seadog project. There has been an idea about having a subcommittee of the EDC that meets consistently to discuss parking and any ideas on this issue. Mr. Proulx felt that they discuss parking all the time. Mr. Dean said this is a large topic that includes several factors, he agrees this is an issue they need to look into. He believes in the concept of a working group on this, and that this is a great place to start. Mr. Clement felt that parking, traffic and mobility is something that has been mentioned a lot in the master plan. He felt that if they let the master plan paly out they may get something more concrete out of this. He felt they should let that evolve out of this process first. Mr. Winham asked what we can do now to collect data or pitch ideas so that when the master planning process makes some recommendations they can offer some solutions. Mr. Gutstein felt we should be thinking about economic development and he did not want to be the sounding board for parking concerns to the determent of development.

7. Discussion: Workforce Attraction & Retention: Ms. MacDonald looked at the CEDs and noted that there was one called Workforce Attraction & Retention. She wonders why Exeter does not have the sorts of things that help Entrepreneurs, startups, etc. She knows a gentleman in town who runs an incubator in Amesbury, and there are some in Portsmouth. She is not saying we should create an Incubator in town, but it's just an idea. Mr. Gutstein felt this was an interesting direction to explore, it does not require physical assets it's just leveraging what we already have in the community. It allows them to explore economic development in a different paradigm. Mr. Gutstein felt it could be a unique opportunity to partner with the academy. Mr. Dean wondered if this could be more of a college level partnership, it's an interesting idea and if there is a model to look at that is working it could be worth to have scouts go out to see what makes it work. Mr. Smith said that Durham is creating one of these right now and it is part of UNH but it came from the town. Mr. Smith suggested they take the next month to gather real life examples and learn more about this. Mr. Smith and Mr. Gutstein would work on this.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 25, 2017

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Bergeron moved to adjourn at 8:46PM, Mr. Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dionne