

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

July 21, 2015

## MINUTES

**EDA Members Present:** Chub Whitten, James Kelly, George Sterling, Adam Hamilton, Hope Taylor, Peter Robinson, Ed Juengst, Jerry Galus, Michael Henry, Gary Carpenter and Jeff Crocker.

**Also Present:** Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and after introductions noted the first item on the agenda was the approval of Minutes.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Kelly) to approve the Minutes of June 16, 2015 with all in favor.

### **EDA Workgroups Updates:**

#### *Marketing Workgroup*

Ms. Taylor reported on a meeting at the High School last Thursday noting “we had a technical guy there and the site builder and they seem to understand each other well.” She went on to say “and they made it clear that they need us to lead, they will get their expectations from us.”

It was noted that support would come in the form three academic classes this fall. Ms. Taylor cited “journalism, technology and photography are the three.” Mr. Robinson gave a brief update on the website. “It is going slower than we anticipated” he said adding “we hope to get a link for your review out soon.” Mr. Robinson also told the members “we need to think about something more permanent than the Chairman of the EDA to head this thing.” He went on to say “we are applying to the town for a budget and a part time (perhaps full time) Director. We have put things in place and it is extremely important to have someone get back to inquiries in a timely fashion and with a consistent message.” When a smaller subcommittee was suggested Mr. Robinson replied “no” adding “this is the time to strike, we have the support and the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee knows we are very active.” Chair Sterling also noted they were researching grants and other forms of financing. Mr. Robinson interjected “and this Director will be going out soliciting businesses” adding with a smile “with this Committee riding herd on him.”

Ms. Miller asked if the Chamber of Commerce would be involved with Mr. Robinson replying “yes at first.” She then mentioned a former economic consultant, Jack Dugan. Mr. Carpenter asked if they should consider an intern from (say) Franklin Peirce University. Chair Sterling noted he had already spoken with them about it “they seem interested” he said but noted “they would have to know the goals and expectations to create a curriculum. Ms. Dietsch interjected that a priority would be to define the role of the Director position with Mr. Galus suggesting “an intern would support the Director who is vested and invested in this town.”

A brief discussion about having their mission goals in place followed. When asked about the status of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan Mr. Throop gave a brief update adding “that is a to-do.” Mr. Whitten asked when the web site would be live with Mr. Robinson replying “we are hoping two to three weeks.” Mr. Whitten noted the importance of this tool and asked if the workgroup needed any additional content from the rest of the members. Thanking him Mr. Robinson said “at this time, no.” Mr. Whitten noted “I am excited, a lot of work has been done and the foundation is laid.” He went on to say “the web site is a great backbone, why wait for it to be totally completed?” Mr. Galus agreed noting the nature of a website is that it is constantly changing. “We can fill it in” he said. Chair Sterling agreed as well noting “we will push for a date (to go live) but we need to have all our bases covered.”

Referencing the creation of a Director position Ms. Dietsch asked “I assume we will start for the mission statement and work down?” Chair Sterling replied “yes.”

#### *Outreach Workgroup*

Chair Sterling reported he had met with several local companies “and they are thrilled about what the EDA can do for them rather than the other way around.” He noted topics included affordable housing for entry level workers making on average \$13.00 to \$18 an hour, having a satellite educational facility in town so people do not have to travel to Keene, Nashua or Lebanon. He told the members “Peterborough used to have a community college (1952 to 1985) called Monadnock Community College founded by David Parks and Walter Peterson.” He noted the possibility to align a vocational training program with the High School or a manufacturing company such as New Hampshire Ball Bearing Corporation. “We are getting there” he said adding “connectability is next.” Mr. Throop suggested the potential for a community college/maker space synergy with Ms. Dietsch replying “put them together!”

Mr. Whitten told the members “for the first time in two years I have multiple people looking at the same industrial space. I am starting to see some sprouts, I am encouraged.”

In conclusion Mr. Kelly asked “so who is the contact person for outreach?” Mr. Whitten replied “go through the Chairman to start. People want to talk to the boss.” Ms. Dietsch noted she would need subcommittee volunteers with Mr. Henry, Mr. Galus and Barbara Miller confirming their interest and participation.

#### *Broad Band Workgroup*

Mr. Throop began with “we have been busy.” He went on to report two meetings last week, “one with Comcast and one with FairPoint.” He told the members they both went just about an hour in duration and “a lot of questions about their infrastructure and current capabilities were discussed.” He also noted two additional providers were to be scheduled. Ms. Miller added a survey of the region would be done to determine the need for broad band. “To aggregate our need and identify businesses to aggregate with us.” She told the members the survey would be conducted by a professional with a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. “With market power we get a better deal” she said. Ms. Dietsch told the members there were all kinds of professionals “hiding in the woodwork” adding “we need to bring them out, we need to spread the word.”

Mr. Throop commended the actions of all the workgroups and as he pondered the next steps he respectfully cautioned the members. “Be very careful about the getting the cart before the horse

with this project” he said adding “there is only so much low-hanging fruit and if it moves before us it could undermine the rest of the town.” He noted the goal was to get broad band to every premise, “do it as a whole” he said “it is a matter of scale.” Mr. Galus agreed noting “it is a matter of scale *and* leverage.” “Good point” interjected Ms. Taylor. Mr. Throop advised the members to take the time to figure out their strategy and then bring that to the table. “We need to be in the driver’s seat” he said.

As a brief discussion about Comcast’s reputation began Mr. Whitten defended the company. He told the members when his business switched to Comcast “it was like the sun came out. It was like night and day.” He went on to encourage the members “the roots have started to take on the broad band initiative and that is great. As a private business owner we need to get this out to our businesses.”

Mr. Henry asked about the next technology coming down the pike. “What is beyond broadband?” he asked. Ms. Dietsch replied “I can tell you because I asked the same question and Carol Monroe told me.” She went on to explain technological upgrades are incorporated into the control boxes, not the lines themselves. Mr. Throop noted Comcast actually has the fiber optic material laid “but they are not connected to a router.” Mr. Gallus added “not connected to the router and switch.”

The members went on to discuss the scale as a community and a theoretical revenue stream that could be built when completed. “It is a complete business model” said Mr. Throop “otherwise we would do it ourselves.” Ms. Dietsch noted “competitive exclusion is their incentive. That is what they are *trying* to do.”

The members briefly discussed Wy Valley and their different strategy of leasing fiber strands and other technologies including wi fi. Mr. Whitten asked about the fourth vendor with Mr. Throop replying “New Hampshire Optical Systems” and noted “in fact there may be a fifth provider who is not currently in the market but may be interested.” Mr. Kelly said that with broad band being a prerequisite for maintaining economic development “we will need a provider to support us to know what we want developed.” Ms. Dietsch interjected “Peterborough is a unique place” reminding them of all those people hiding in the woodwork. “It is a globally networked community but that is not apparent, we need to communicate this to people. If they want this service they have to help us!” Noting corporate executives telecommunicating from their homes she said “this if the model for the future and we as a town can serve that model.” Ms. Taylor said she would like to thank Ms. Dietsch for all of her hard work with Mr. Whiten adding “I second that.”

### **Other Business:**

#### *Chamber of Commerce:*

Chair Sterling told the members there was a space in the Chamber basement that could be renovated and used as an office for the future EDA Growth Coordinator. He also noted the exciting news that the Chamber’s membership has been growing “at a pretty good clip, close to 300 now which is up considerably.” He went on to say “I think the goal is 400 (members) and I think that is attainable within a year.” Ms. Miller mentioned Sean Ryan’s article “Peterborough is Open for Business” in the July/August issue of Business Monadnock.

Chair Sterling reiterated “collaboration is the key to moving forward” and encouraged getting the word out by putting content on social media avenues such as Twitter, Facebook and Linked-In. “We start sharing this and it goes boom, boom, KA-boom” he said. Ms. Dietsch noted concern about the perception of competing with the local newspaper. “Let’s support them in their commercial mission rather than create a separate entity” she said adding “let’s talk to Heather (McKernan, publisher).

*Planning Board:*

Mr. Throop noted the Planning Board had met last night. “The goal was to work on the Open Space Residential Development ordinance” (regarding development in the Rural District) he said. He gave the members a brief history of the inadequacy of the ordinance and the attempt to amend it last year with an Innovative Subdivision amendment. He noted the concern that the amendment made it mandatory for a developer to meet with the Planning Board prior to creating a site plan. “It was seen by some as a taking” he said adding “and it did not pass. None the less it needs to be updated.”

Mr. Throop went on to describe an exercise the Board did that essentially looked at developments pre and post zoning and listing what they liked about the sites and what detracted from them. They reviewed Steele Road (Nubanuset Cooperative Living), East and West Ridge Roads, Long Hill Estates, Tagert Road, Robbe Farm Road, Lobacki Drive, Mountain View Drive, and Hunter Farm Road trying to identify aspects of each that carries forward the rural character of what the town has said it wants through the vision work that has been done. “We like our rural character” he said with a smile adding “it is a discussion in process.” He also noted the need for affordable housing for young families and the aging population wishing to downsize. “Be it increased density in the Village Node or new Village Nodes we need to redraft the ordinance to get the types of development we want while meeting the needs of the community. “I am excited by the caliber of the discussion” he said. Mr. Galus interjected “the exact same ordinance *word for word* with the exception of being mandatory also failed” adding “so it was not just the mandatory wording.” In agreement Mr. Throop said “we have to focus on the incentive side of the discussion.” Mr. Juengst said he got a lot out of the exercise. “We have 21 different neighborhoods to review, our homework is to go out and look at them.”

*Monadnock Art X Tech:*

Mr. Kelly told the members they had moved into a space in the Monadnock Plaza. “We will be holding events throughout August to gather members and supporters to get to the point of making this space happen” he said. Ms. Dietsch noted she was very impressed with the equipment going into the building, particularly noting a machine that engraves and cuts all materials and is sought after by “artists, techies and craftsmen.” Mr. Kelly concluded “we will stay engaged with other parts of the community to make this happen” noting specifically the High School and the Chamber of Commerce for resources. “Please come and see us” he said.

Mr. Hamilton reminded his fellow members of their EDA-sponsored program featuring People’s Bank Chief Investment Officer John Traynor was Tuesday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Monadnock Center for History & Culture. He noted Mr. Traynor would provide an overview of the state of the economy and offer information that will allow Monadnock Region businesses to develop a better understanding of what to expect in the economy. “He is coming from Bridgeport (CT), passing over Keene to come here” he said adding “I would like to see 30 or more people so

please come.” Mr. Whitten interjected “I second that as well, this speaker will be speaking globally, I encourage you all to attend.”

Mr. Hamilton also noted Chesterfield New Hampshire is starting an economic development committee “a group very similar to us, having the same problems we are having.” He spoke briefly about collaboration with that group.

**Future Topics and Speakers:**

Mr. Throop did a quick poll of the members to see what date in August would be best for inviting WiValley in to speak. The members decided Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> would be best. No date was set for New Hampshire Optical Systems.

Ms. Dietsch noted she would await the EDA mission statement and goals and thanked Mr. Galus, Mr. Henry, Chair Sterling and Barbara Miller for participating in the newly formed subcommittee “to build the foundation for economic development as we refine personnel roles and responsibilities in the coming years.”

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday August 18, 2015

Chair Sterling concluded “your charge is to carry the excitement out into Main Street, thank you.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,  
Administrative Assistant