

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

August 18, 2015

## MINUTES

**EDA Members Present:** Chub Whitten, James Kelly, George Sterling, Adam Hamilton, Hope Taylor, Ed Juengst 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 (Kelly/Hamilton) to approve the Minutes of July 21, 2015 with minor corrections with all in favor.

### **EDA Workgroups Updates:**

#### *Marketing Workgroup*

Ms. Taylor began her update by noting “we are working on two things, obviously the website (which is 99% done) and the collaboration with the school and the curriculum for the kids to maintain it.” She went on to say “we are meeting with the school tomorrow and Oliver (Strube of 350 Media, LLC (DBA Abel Twitchell)) will be with us next Tuesday for our subcommittee meeting to present the whole site.” Mr. Whitten noted his concern that while many of the web pages were created “a lot of the real estate is blank.” From the audience Selectman Barbara Miller interjected “the information needs to be accurate and timely.” Ms. Taylor noted her concern that administration (town officials) look at it as well. “This group will have the first look at it but it should not go out without the Board of Selectmen and town administrators seeing it first” she said. Mr. Whitten noted he could send out the link today “but some of the pages are blank.” Ms. Miller suggested promoting the website at the Board of Selectman’s meeting in September.

#### *Broad Band Workgroup*

Noting that Mr. Galus and Ms. Deitsch were not present Mr. Throop gave a brief update on this workgroup. He shared thoughts from their recent meetings noting the members had heard presentations from Comcast, Fairpoint and Wy Valley “who, by the way was interesting in that they brought a different kind of approach as to how to distribute hi-speed broadband throughout the community.” He noted the presentation raised more questions than answers in the 40-minute presentations “but we learned there is more than one way to skin a cat. There *are* alternatives.” He briefly described a similar technology to Wy Valleys that was a hybrid consisting of an engineered fiber backbone that distributes broadband through short distance via a wireless connection.

Mr. Throop then reviewed the next steps of setting up visits to other towns engaged in this effort “particularly in western Massachusetts and Maine” he said adding “we will be working on developing a protocol with questions to ask, particularly on the finance mechanisms.” A member

asked about any legislative action regarding removing some of the barriers to bonding such a project with Mr. Throop replying he thought a bill had made its way through the House of Representatives but from there went to interim study by the Senate. “Does that mean kill the bill?” asked Ms. Miller. Mr. Throop replied “well not necessarily, we will see what we can find out about it, we certainly are not alone in calling for this, I am guardedly optimistic.” A brief discussion on an engineered customized broadband system specifically for Peterborough including phasing, viability, antennas and repeaters, critical mass of customers, cost and policies followed. “There is still a lot of work to be done. It is not a rapid process but we are getting there” said Mr. Throop.

#### *Outreach Workgroup*

Mr. Whitten noted he was thrilled that the website was ready. He told the members he would like to meet right after the Marketing Group next Tuesday. “We need to get to the next step” he said adding “I would like to have a publishing firm come to visit first.” Chair Sterling agreed noting “we see business people on the street but now we can get more formal as summer closes, see them in their offices and ask *what we can do* for them.” The members all agreed housing was a major factor. Mr. Whitten noted “we keep hearing there is no housing for the starter employee whose salary range starts at the \$14.00 to \$18.00 dollar and hour range” adding “that will not get you a \$150,000.00 house.”

Ms. Taylor noted the need for small apartments (studio sized) close to town. “There is affordable housing” she said “but it is mostly used up and is for families, not individuals.” “Small apartments with a community environment, in the Downtown so they can get home quick and easy and get back the next day” added Mr. Whitten. A brief discussion about boarding houses followed.

From the audience Pelagia Vincent spoke briefly about several companies in New Hampshire and Massachusetts that are trying to learning more on the housing issue. “There are possibilities” she said citing the creation of mixed use buildings with affordable housing. “It is still at the discovery stage” she said adding “and these are experts doing this for a living, not ma & pa companies.” Mr. Throop briefly reviewed the regulatory piece of this puzzle as well as the implementation of the *Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District* (an approved amendment to create additional housing opportunities in portions of the Family and General Residence Districts located in close proximity to the downtown). Mr. Whitten interjected “it is time to update the inventory.”

#### **Discussion of Mission Statement and Vision Statement:**

##### *Mission:*

The EDA’s mission is to build the economic vitality of the town while retaining and enhancing the physical, cultural, social, recreational and environmental character of the town.

The members briefly discussed the statement and all agreed it was fine with the exception of changing the word “build” to the word “strengthen”. Mr. Crocker had questioned it and the members agreed. Options included *facilitate* and *encourage*. Via email Ms. Dietsch had suggested *strengthen* and the members agreed that was the best choice of words.

##### *Vision:*

The EDA’s long-term vision is for the Town of Peterborough to:

- \*Be a global player in specific industry sectors
- \*Have a vibrant and integrated locally-based economy
- \*Attract, develop and retain a highly-skilled, talented and innovative workforce.

Mr. Crocker led a brief discussion about the first bullet in the Vision statement. “This is a long term vision for the Town of Peterborough, it does not belong to this committee, the *community* does the building” he said. Mr. Whitten cautioned about locking into specific industry sectors “if a major insurance company comes in and wants the space what are you going to do? Ms. Miller noted the global player reference and recognized the international component of the community. Mr. Throop interjected “some the sub-committee members were not sure about the words “global player” and expressed a need to better understand how it applies to a small town.” Ms. Taylor suggested they say *support* the global player, Chair Sterling suggested they better define global player. Mr. Crocker agreed adding “I am not sure I know what that means.” Ms. Taylor once again suggested replacing the *be a* global player to *support* global players. Ms. Miller interjected “that word is so overused” adding “how about coming in from the other direction and saying *eliminate barriers* to global players?”

Chair Sterling suggested they vote on the Vision and the first two bullets lines of the Mission Statement. “Let’s do that much today” he said as he asked for a motion.

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Taylor) to approve the Vision Statement with replacing the word “build” with the word “support” and the second two bullets of the Mission Statement as written with all in favor. It was noted the first bullet item would need to be more thoroughly discussed.

In closing Mr. Whitten reported he would be at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting this evening to answer any questions about a pharmaceutical manufacturing company who signed a lease for space in his Business Park at 49 Vose Farm Road. “I am very excited about it” he said noting the company was Prime Alternative Treatment Care Counseling LLC. He gave a brief history of the company’s intention to manufacture cannabis in Peterborough to be sold in a Dispensary in Merrimack (Concord and Nashua?). “They are spending a *lot* of money creating a pharmaceutical manufacturing environment” he said adding “with 18 new employees (with a potential for up to 30) and salaries starting at the \$40,000.00 range.” Mr. Whitten reiterated the company would be manufacturing only. “There will be no public access, it will be a super controlled, clean room environment with no dispensary” he said adding “this is exciting for the town.” Selectman Barbara Miller noted representatives from the NH Department of Health and Human Services would also be present at the meeting. “It is a public forum, everyone is welcome” she said. Ms. Miller also noted these meeting were streamed and could be watched on Public Television (Channel 22).

Mr. Whitten concluded by reporting he had met with town officials as well as the Police Chief on the matter “they are fully up to speed on it” he said adding “this is good news, good jobs in a new cutting-edge industry, it is a big positive for the town.”

### **Other Business: Updates**

#### *Chamber of Commerce:*

Mr. Sterling reported the Chamber was hosting their annual Golf Outing this Saturday.

*Planning Board:*

Mr. Throop reported the Global Montello Group had obtained conditional approval to raise and redevelop the current Mr. Mike's convenience store and gas station on Grove Street. "It was a pretty incredible process with an applicant that was willing to work with the Board and it will be a vast improvement over what is currently there" he said adding "the Board is pleased with the outcome." He concluded by noting "the approval was conditional so they have a number of things to do, but it was great to be able to get them through the process in essentially two meetings. That is the main news."

*Master Plan Steering Committee:*

Mr. Throop gave a brief update of the status of the Vision Chapter of the Master Plan.

*Monadnock Art X Tech:*

Mr. Kelly reported this group was scheduled to meet tomorrow night. He spoke briefly about the new technology capabilities that included using solid works and 3-dimensional. "All in the former Beer Store" he said with a smile. He noted the space had been renovated with equipment in place. "All we need to do is get it running" he said. He noted the meeting would feature a learning event about the technology capabilities and was open to the public. "Please come" he said.

*Monadnock Region Vision:*

Mr. Kelly asked for clarification on the Monadnock Center of Excellence. Mr. Throop noted he thought it was a whitepaper on the potential of developing a focus on industry segments within which we already have strengths, skills, expertise and connections, essentially to create centers of excellence in Peterborough, that would become part of the town's identity. The paper was written by Jeanne Dietsch. Mr. Kelly asked "what is its purpose?" Mr. Throop suggested that Ms. Dietsch would be in the best position to answer that questions and suggested that she share the paper with the EDA members. Mr. Kelly replied "OK, but it sounded like a new version of the EDA." Ms. Taylor suggested they speak directly with Ms. Dietsch about it at the next meeting. Chair Sterling agreed adding "Jeanne is a prolific writer."

**Future Topics and Speakers:**

Noting the installation of solar panels and arrays "all over New England" Chair Sterling suggested inviting a local solar panel expert and installer to a meeting to speak. A brief discussion about solar and hydro-power technologies and work being done by locals Greg Blake of Peterborough and Bob King of Keene followed. Audience member Dennis Calcutt also noted work being done by Harrisville's Lori Barge.

Chair Sterling noted "at one time there were five hydro-power sites in Peterborough" with Ms. Taylor adding "and all over New England, they disappeared."

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday October 20, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,

Administrative Assistant