

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

November 17, 2015

MINUTES

EDA Members Present: Chub Whitten, James Kelly, George Sterling, Adam Hamilton, Hope Taylor, Jeanne Dietsch and Ed Juengst

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. “I think we can pass on the intros” he said.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Kelly) to approve the Minutes of September 15, 2015 and October 20, 2015 as written will all in favor.

EDA Workgroup Updates:

Outreach Work Group

Mr. Whitten began with an apology. “I am sorry, I have been slammed with business, which is a good thing, *that* is a good thing to report but I do not have much else.” He went on note he looked forward to discussing the part time economic development position. “It is nice to get some focus” he said adding “and I love Jeanne’s goals. I think we can create a very effective theme around them and work towards them. Thank you Jeanne.”

Mr. Whitten also noted he’d had an hour of face time with the EDA Board in his hometown. As Ms. Taylor asked about the specifics to their approach Mr. Whitten explained “they have a lot of strong companies but a weak downtown.” He reiterated the big problem of *what happens when someone moves out* and preparing for that. “This town however happens to have the good fortune of being close to Boston” he said.

Chair Sterling mentioned he’s had a conversation with Gary Armstrong, formerly of Monadnock Business Ventures who reiterated a strong workforce is important to attract business and affordable housing. “It is a chicken and egg kind of thing, you just have to kind of do it all at the same time” he said.

Marketing Work Group

Ms. Taylor gave the members an update on marketing and the website. “The website is up” she said adding she was meeting with the website developer to talk about ongoing collaboration with the school (ConVal) for its maintenance. She noted the goal was to get the site *front and center* and that Mary Lou O’Neil was becoming involved to assist with her internship program at the school. “They have done some interviews and have several things to put on the site soon” she said. Chair Sterling asked “like a blog?” with Ms. Taylor replying “yes, like a blog.”

EDA Strategic Planning Group

Ms. Dietsch spoke briefly about what the website and what the members wanted to accomplish. “What we want it to say, what action to take as this in essence is our direct mail piece. We want to focus on building a mailing list” she said.”

Ms. Dietsch went on to say “this is also a sales process, fist people have to know we exist.” She suggested then urged the members to link the webpage (www.peterboroughworks.com) to their personal social media pages. She noted getting people to the website was the first step in interacting with them with the goal of getting their names and building that mailing list. “We are not selling ads, we want to get to the human beings and interact with them,” she said. Chair Sterling agreed noting “we are promoting not prospecting.” Mr. Harrington noted most people will do their homework and review a website long before they reach out. Ms. Dietsch suggested if that was the case the website should have all the demographics and links to maps and other information. A very brief discussion about search engine optimization followed.

Ms. Dietsch then reviewed a power point presentation she had prepared on the survey results. “The survey is closed and complete” she said adding “there were 600 and something responses, 409 from Peterborough.” She reviewed survey questions including *industries represented, where residents work, input and control on business location, potential expansion of business, amount of work done on the internet, current need for better internet and satisfaction level with current internet.*

The presentation listed three goals. #1 to help improve the town’s overall economic well-being by improving its foundational infrastructure “this includes an understanding of the current infrastructure, current internet use and aspirations and willingness to pay for internet” she said.

Goal #2 is to better understand the work habits of our residents to improve their ability to do business from town. “This requires knowing where people work, how they use the internet, how their needs are being met by the current service and what

are their needs *above* the current service” said Ms. Dietsch. “Goal #3 involves collaboration with surrounding towns” she said adding “these are three year goals.”

In summary Ms. Dietsch noted lowering the vacancy rate to 15% (from 38%) was another goal being worked on. Mr. Whitten noted the importance of getting other landlords on board and involved. Ms. Dietsch reiterated “we want to maintain our vibrant home and telecommuter population, attract a skilled and talented work force to reside in the region, increase tourism revenues by 25% and retain the Monadnock aesthetics, natural environment and culture of village life.”

Ms. Dietsch concluded by noting the part time Economic Development position was being vetted and the specialist was anticipated to be on board January 2016.

Broad Band Work Group

Ms. Dietsch noted adequate, scalable broadband connectivity would attract business and a skilled workforce. She reviewed the need for additional lodging “to increase availability of overnight stays to increase cross-marketing potential and tourism revenues” as well as acknowledging the global players and providing a maximum competitive advantage for them.

Mr. Throop spoke briefly about zoning regulation amendment, particularly for the development of the Rural District and the creation of village nodes outside the Downtown.

The members briefly discussed the status and future of the now vacant IDG building (Route 101 and Elm Street). Mr. Throop noted “whatever goes there should contribute to and compliment the town.” The members agreed when he said “everything we do needs to support our differentiation.” Mr. Throop also noted the concession made by Dunkin Donuts at a recent Planning Board meeting (removal of a proposed monolith and racing stripe around the building and molted, beige/brown colors instead of pink and orange) to be in keeping with the character of the town. “That is because we have reasonable strong standards of what we want to see in town” he said.

Site visits to Sanford, Maine and Leverett, Massachusetts:

Mr. Galus reported the town of Leverett, MA (a town of about 2000, got high speed broadband when it citizens voted a modest property tax increase in return for the long-term benefits of a FTTH network) was dealing with how to deal with all the other towns wanting to come visit them. Mr. Throop explained that fiber optics was connected to all homes in Leverett (814 residences) at a cost 3.6 million dollars and funded by grants and taxation. No update on the report from Sanford,

Maine. Chair Sterling asked about getting touch with a rural broadband contact in Concord for assistance and direction.

Other Business and Updates:

Mr. Kelly interjected “many of you know my favorite word is *collaboration*” adding “and I have been working with a colleague of mine in Malden, Massachusetts and we have identified three areas where the collaboration of the EDA can assist in *effective local growth, production, sale and consumption of food* via collaborative research with the town’s Agricultural Committee, Cornucopia, local growers and food stores as well as the current and potential efforts to improve the quality and quantity of local food production and consumption.” He continued “*Provision of effective and efficient health care to our local population via research of Accountable Care pilot organizations*. This would include Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital, Monadnock Community Hospital and other health organizations in town to understand possible action to increase effective and efficient health care. And finally he noted “*reduce energy consumption to enhance corporate and personal sustainability* via research with Schneider Electric Company in Andover, Massachusetts as well as local businesses and individuals to understand how to create the Internet of Things technology (intelligent sensors) to measure and evaluate the consumption of energy in local businesses and homes.”

Mr. Throop mentioned working with the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition (MFCC), a regional coalition whose mission is to support a sustainable food system by cultivating community action and building collaborations to implement effective programs, projects, and policies. Ms. Taylor mentioned Monadnock Buy Local, a regional network of citizens, businesses and organizations that promotes the positive economic and community benefits of spending dollars locally, while supporting programs and policies that forward a local, green and fair economy. Mr. Throop also mentioned Monadnock Buy Local Director Jen Risley. Mr. Whitten interjected “this is taking hold across the country not just in Peterborough.”

Mr. Kelly briefly reviewed the difference between affordable and accountable care “they are different” he said. The membership also discussed the Vision 20/20 initiative launched by Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene to be the healthiest community by the year 2020. One of several Vision 20/20 goals is to establish work-site wellness teams and plans that support healthy eating and active living. These efforts include the work of Jose Montero, VP Population Health and Health System Integrator, Linda Rubin, Director of Community Health Improvement Plan and Rudy Fedrizzi, Director of Community Health Clinical Integration all at the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene.

Consumption and improvement in energy consumption via a highly automated technology was the final topic with Ms. Dietsch noting Monadnock Art X Tech (MAXT) sponsoring smart home workshops beginning December 1st with Jeff Stone as the speaker.

Regarding additional outreach Chair Sterling noted Pelagia Vincent was orchestrating a NHFA meeting November 23rd “right here in the Selectmen’s meeting room where the EDA and NH Housing Authority will discuss the workforce housing issue.”

Mr. Throop told the members that they need to convene a meeting of the Greater Downtown TIF to vote on whether or not TIF funds should be used for the downtown storm water separation project. This suggestion came from the Capital Improvement Program Committee. He noted “should the Downtown TIF members vote to use TIF funds, a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to do so would be needed from this group.” He also noted the importance of having GDTIF member Willard, Gregg and Robinson be at the meeting. “I will contact them personally” he said adding “any we need two additional members for that committee, the only prerequisite is that you have an interest in the downtown.”

Mr. Throop went on to briefly review the Planning Board’s goals of defining how the Rural District may be developed over time with the suggestion of creating new village nodes and possibly the use of transfer development rights. “They will be working on updating the zoning to get the town we want” he said.

Future Topics and Speakers:

Mr. Whitten suggested initiating conversation with the hospital. Ms. Dietsch interjected “I am meeting with them Thursday, what are your questions?” Mr. Whitten noted he just thought it would be a good idea “to have someone come talk to us.” Ms. Dietsch noted she would follow up.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday December 15, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,
Administrative Assistant