

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

April 25, 2017

## MINUTES

**Present:** James Kelly, George Sterling, Barbara Miller, Adam Hamilton, Martha Schaefer, Dave Smith, and Cy Gregg

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

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Smith) to approve the Minutes of March 28, 2017 as written with all in favor.

With the Context for Today's Agenda projected on the screen Ms. Dietsch reviewed how each item on the agenda fit into the three year Goals of the EDA. She then presented a marketing update noting (first) the *Why move to Peterborough* brochure boxes were strategically placed throughout the Downtown. (Second) she had created a map of the Common Pathway (and bike path) from one end to the other with a discussion of whether or not to list businesses along the route. She told the members with an excess of 300 businesses in town not everyone would fit and a brief discussion followed. Chair Sterling suggested locating larger landmarks such as the Peterborough and Monadnock Plazas, the Town House, Library and Depot Square. Lastly Ms. Dietsch noted an ongoing Facebook marketing promotion. "Actually two of them" she said as she showed the members percentages of article and topic *reach* (eyeballs on it) and *results* (an action on it) as a way of measuring the cost of advertising to age demographics. "We need to pay attention to this marketing effort to refine and optimize information" she said. Ms. Dietsch concluded by noting "we need a volunteer on the EDA with a marketing focus."

### **Chamber of Commerce – Scenic Byway Project:**

Ms. Schaefer presented a proposal for a scenic and cultural byway for the Monadnock Region. She began by noting 22 (over 1,000 miles) of designated byways offering something for everyone (tourists and residents). "There are zero byways in southern New Hampshire" she said adding "and with the Main Street Bridge construction in 2018/2019 the Downtown traffic patterns will change." Ms. Schaefer reviewed the positive exposure and attention a byway tour would bring the town as well as "giving us more control of the route we want people to follow."

Ms. Schaefer told the members the Byway application began with a nomination from the state. “Why now?” she asked as she went on to explain the last nomination cycle was in 2014 and the only come around every couple of years. She noted the timeliness of this application as it was due May 5<sup>th</sup> for a May 8<sup>th</sup> review by the state.

Ms. Schaefer reviewed the route (beginning at Grove and Main Streets in Peterborough) and traveling through the eastern portion of the Monadnock region (focusing on the Contoocook River and Valley). Pointing out the north and south loops of the trail Ms. Schaefer noted “trails, common pathways and recreational and historic attributes will be highlighted along the route” adding “with all the trails leading back to Peterborough.”

Ms. Schaefer went on to review the promotion plan (social media, dedicated website, Facebook page, printed information, state level promotion and a branded logo from the state) and process and management (research, development, application preparation, photography and mapping, presentation to the DOT, media and marketing development and ongoing maintenance and management of the byway).

Ms. Schaefer concluded by telling the members the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce was willing to spearhead the initiative and oversee the continued maintenance of the program over the years. “Our budget is set for this year” she said as she asked for a 60/40 percent (EDA/Chamber) share of the initial funding necessary to develop the program. “We have a short window of opportunity” she said as she distributed a proposed budget the group. It was noted a 60/40 split would be in the vicinity of a \$3750.00 cost to the EDA.

It was noted the byway extended into several other towns before looping back to Peterborough and a member asked if those towns had been contacted at all. Ms. Schaefer replied they had not. She cited the very short window of opportunity as a reason but also that “Peterborough would control the route and all roads lead back to Peterborough if the idea.”

Mr. Hamilton interjected “this is precisely the kind of thing the EDA should get behind, it is a no-brainer” adding “there is no byway in the area.” Ms. Dietsch agreed noting “it is also the type of thing that helps when trying to solicit a hotel in the area.” Mr. Gregg asked “given the nomination and designation process from the state what are the odds we’ll get it?” Ms. Schaefer replied “very good, they came *to us*.” Mr. Hamilton interjected “I propose 70/30 split and that we do it. This is what we should be getting behind, it is tangible, long lasting and measureable.”

It can have an obvious, immediate economic impact on our Town” he said. When asked about other forms of funding Mr. Throop noted he’d researched it and there were not really any other funds for this type of development. A brief discussion about the EDA’s budget followed with Mr. Throop noted a balance of \$2,300.00 from last year’s budget that needed to be spent before the end of the fiscal year. “June 30th” interjected Ms. Miller.

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Kelly) to partner in a monetary fashion with the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce and provide 70% of the proposed cost (approximately \$6000.00, including \$2300.00 left over from their 2016 fiscal budget) for the creation of a scenic byway to generate and maintain a level of economic vitality to the greater downtown area with all in favor.

### **EDA Membership Changes:**

Chair Sterling announced Peter Robinson’s departure from the membership. He noted Mr. Robinson believed he could better serve the economic nature of the downtown community by working on making his anchor store stronger to continue to attract people to the downtown.

Chair Sterling went on to say “he has done a lot of great stuff through the years. Be sure to thank him when you see him.” With that a motion was made/seconded (Gregg/Kelly) to nominate Mr. Hamilton as the Vice Chairman of the Committee with all in favor. With a smile Mr. Hamilton replied “I accept this position *after* I resign my Treasurer position.”

Chair Sterling then recommended alternate Dave Smith be moved up to a full member status. “That recommendation has to go to the Board of Selectmen” he said. A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Hamilton) to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to appoint Mr. Smith a full member of the EDA with all in favor.

### **Economic Vitality Master Plan Update:**

Ms. Dietsch noted a full report would be presented next month. “We are almost done and have made enormous progress” she said. Also a member of the subcommittee, Mr. Kelly added “we need to have a full report, there is a lot for the EDA agenda in there.” “Oh, yes,” replied Ms. Dietsch. Mr. Throop noted the chapter would be presented to the EDA and then the Master Plan Steering Committee (both next month) before a public hearing is scheduled.

Ms. Miller noted the importance of filling the alternate positions with Ms. Dietsch noting she was working on getting a neighbor involved.

**Nashua Community College Event Promotion:**

Chair Sterling announced an Open House (3:00 to 5:00 p.m.) followed by a meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> noting “we are looking for a good community turnout at this event. It is a meet and greet type of thing and we should all be there with our brass on.”

**Future Speakers:**

Chair Sterling held up a copy of “Employment Projections for Planning Regions 2014-2024” from the Economic Development Advisory Committee of Southwest Region Planning Commission. He passed it around for a quick review noting it is perspectives and projections, it is an opportunity to mold and shape.” He also suggested this could be a future speaker topic.

Ms. Miller asked about the hydropower project. With its status unclear Chari Sterling noted he would follow-up on it.

From the audience Reporter Ashley Saari asked about the **Housing Master Plan Update** with Mr. Throop noting they’d had a kickoff meeting and their first work meeting was scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup>. “They are just getting started” he said.

Mr. Smith asked about the Regional Business Forum with Mr. Throop noting he would follow up with Mr. Galus. Mr. Smith reiterated NHBB would be pleased to host it and Ms. Dietsch interjected she would like to be involved with the forum as well.

Mr. Kelly asked for and got greater clarification on the Context Sheet for the Agenda that Ms. Dietsch had distributed at the beginning of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

**Next Meeting:**

May 30, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant