

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

April 26, 2016

MINUTES

Present: James Kelly, George Sterling, Peter Robinson, Cy Gregg, Barbara Miller, Jeanne Dietsch, Jerry Galus and Gary Carpenter.

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

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:33 and appointed Alternate Carpenter to sit. He noted they would move to business presented by Mr. Robinson as he had to (apologetically) leave the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Robinson began by thanking Ms. Dietsch for all of her hard work on the website. "It is up and we are looking for additional content and driving businesses to the site using Goggle ads" he said. Mr. Robinson explained how the payment system worked (pay per click) adding "it is *not* enough to be a beautiful place to live, we need to gain traction and exposure." He went on to request \$5000.00 for this project. Ms. Dietsch noted \$1000.00 would be earmarked for videos for You Tube "with the same type of billing situation" she said. She noted the remaining \$4000.00 would be used for ads and advertising the website.

A brief discussion about the request followed with Mr. Throop noting there was some money in their budget. "We will have to look at the budget and decide how you want to spend your money" he said.

Mr. Robinson asked if he could make a motion provided the money was available. Mr. Gregg asked about use of Greater Downtown TIF Funds with Mr. Throop explaining TIF funds were specific to geographical areas. Mr. Gregg noted they could begin by focusing on Downtown businesses. Mr. Throop told the members he would review the TIF Plan for its rules on promotional activities.

Mr. Galus asked about the cost of the Google ads for the website. Ms. Dietsch reviewed the process noting maximums would be set on a daily basis. Mr. Robinson agreed noting "a maximum is set so there is a cap on spending. If it is gone in two months it is gone, we are all done until we get more money."

Chair Sterling asked if there were other places to spend \$5000.00 that may be more important with Mr. Throop noting “assuming you get the funding for a contractor there may be something out of their activities where they would be looking for some funds, promotional or not, there could be other uses envisioned for the funds.” Mr. Robinson noted hard copy brochures were an example “but we need to get the people interested first” he said. Ms. Dietsch noted the Chamber of Commerce was working on a lot of promotional material and suggested the group coordinate with them.

A motion was made/seconded (Robinson/Kelly) to approve \$5000.00 (if available) in funds for advertising the Peterboroughworks.com website with both Google ads and You Tube videos with all in favor.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Gregg) to approve the Minutes of March 15, 2016 with all in favor.

Update on Petition Warrant:

Ms. Dietsch began with a series of slides depicting the components of Peterborough employment including technical manufacturing, IT/software web marketing, arts, tourism, recreations and local retail, services and government. She cited the (large) amount of small and home businesses and the need to attract skilled employees and entrepreneurs. “We are competing with the rest of the world for companies” she said adding “and if we help employers grow, Peterborough has more jobs.” She noted the need for a system to track occupancies and vacancies as well as a system to identify threats of job loss and buildings. “It is called stickiness” she said adding “the home business and entrepreneurs are mobile and can go anywhere, we need to develop relationships as well as friendships with them by creating places to interact with them, a place to “hang out” and share ideas and office equipment.”

On building tourism she told the members “this is a chicken and egg problem” adding “to build tourism you a hotel and to justify a hotel you need tourism.” In conclusion Ms. Dietsch reviewed the EDA’s 3-year Goals which included *creating new jobs while retaining existing jobs, lowering the vacancy rate of the commercial and industrial properties in town, attracting a skilled and talented workforce, maintaining our vibrant home business and telecommuter population, increase tourism revenues and retain the aesthetics, culture, natural environment and village life of the town.*

Lastly she reviewed the 2-year EDA Support Contract Outcomes which included *raising the visibility of our online presence which is designed to attract businesses, entrepreneurs and workforce, create a system for tracking commercial vacancies, identification of complementary business targets, identify, equip and build the community with a temporary incubation space to serve while Library renovations are completed, provide consultation to increase overall business revenues through collaboration, mentoring and cross-marketing, develop metrics for these goals, identify opportunities for state assistance as well as liaising with other local and federal agencies to meet PEDAs goals and lastly to regularly prepare reports, drafts, and policies and procedures, make presentations and communicate with the EDA on progress and any concerns so that outcomes may be met.*

Chair Sterling looked around the room and said “now is the time to write letters to the Editor of the newspaper.” He quickly reviewed the letters policy of a 300-word maximum from a personal e-mail so it can be verified. He added he had sent out a list of titles (letter topics) to think about and that Mr. Carpenter had already written a letter. Mr. Kelly inquired about the status of a letter he had written with Mr. Throop noting he would follow up on it. He also reminded the members “Economic Development Contractor is the important term here, we fund as we go and at best it is a 2-year project.”

Ms. Dietsch reiterated the goals of stickiness for the telecommuters and entrepreneurs and forms of assistance and motivation for the locals (businesses who seem to be a bit stuck in a rut). “A what can we do for you sort of approach” she said adding “looking at the talent just in this room it can be a big brother/big sister type of thing to offer suggestions on strategy, positions, whatever they may need.”

Ms. Miller asked about letter to editors of other newspapers (Keene Sentinel, Union Leader) given the 19,000 people in the 6 towns that surround the town. The members agreed that type of publicity would not hurt.

Mr. Carpenter mentioned ideas to attract a younger population. “Harlow’s has an up and coming crowd” he said adding “but how do you keep them when the lights go out at 8:00 at night?” He also noted the retail store that used to exist at ConVal and asked if the school district offered any entrepreneurial classes with a brief discussion following. “Picking up the entrepreneurial spirit is important” said Mr. Carpenter. Ms. Dietsch interjected “you are right and the comment you made about how the town closes down is a *big deal*.” Mr. Throop interjected that working on a more critical mass in the Downtown could promote longer retail and entertainment business hours. He noted the second and third floors of many Downtown buildings

being empty. He noted that in many cases the zoning regulations would support it but the problem may be the building codes. "Can it be done?" he asked adding "I don't know." He went on to tell the members about a recent Planning Board meeting where the members discussed several webinars on traditional and incremental development and the mission to look at the financial realities facing America and a model of development that allows cities, towns and neighborhoods to become and remain financially strong and resilient. Ms. Miller noted opportunities to for non-profit groups to preserve old buildings with grants "but it takes a great deal of courage and commitment." Ms. Dietsch asked "any non-profit?" with Ms. Miller replying "yes."

Mr. Carpenter suggested "we need to see the big picture and pick ourselves up by the bootstraps, and do it now or we will have problems in the future." Mr. Kelly agreed noting "we need to work for the bottom up not the top down." Another brief discussion about the role of the EDA Contractor followed with Ms. Miller reiterating "the simple questions is *how can we help you?*" Ms. Dietsch agreed adding "but we still need someone like Jerry (Galus) or James (Kelly) to take them out to lunch as a friend/mentor to discuss points for collaboration." Ms. Miller asked about an organization called SCORE (they have an office in Keene) and Mr. Carpenter spoke briefly about veteran's helping veterans through business enterprise. In conclusion and with a smile Chair Sterling concluded "imagine walking into a business and offering assistance, and not asking for money."

Public Meeting:

Mr. Throop noted a public information session to review the zoning amendments on the 2016 Ballot will be held April 27th at 6:00 p.m. He looked up and said "I can't tell you the importance of you showing up tomorrow" adding "we posted it on the website, in the public buildings and in the newspaper." He explained it was an opportunity to take the time to provide assistance to the townspeople and review the amendments. Ms. Miller asked Mr. Throop to see if the meeting could be recorded so they could post it to the town's public access channel. Mr. Throop reiterated "it is a chance to learn about the zoning amendments as well as your Petition Article" with Chair Sterling adding "and it is a great opportunity for public relations."

Strategic Plan Implementation:

The Greater Peterborough Map-athon (an EDA and Chamber of Commerce joint venture). Ms. Dietsch noted NH Travel and Tourism is seeking more events, content and itineraries to promote in the Monadnock Region. She told the members Tom Strickland of Sequoya Technologies had volunteered his facility to collaborate with other attendees to create packages to draw more visitors to the

area. (Example of the Waterhouse Restaurant and Peterborough Players was mentioned). She told the members the date was May 13, 2016 with a session (for up to eight entities maximum) at 8:00 am and another one at 10:00 am, that it was free and Chambers members would get first dibs. “You go to the NH Travel and Tourism website and the Monadnock Region is one great big hole” she said adding “this is also another example of mentoring.” When Mr. Kelly asked her about the pollinator’s idea she replied “this is not local, its purpose is to bring revenues *into* the town. A brief discussion on the *Michael Shuman presentation* followed.

Update on Affordable Housing: Ms. Taylor was not present so Mr. Armstrong gave a brief update. He noted the committee had been meeting regularly and they had received some expertise and assistance on grant writing from Ms. Miller.

Other Business:

Mr. Throop noted the subcommittee on the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan was holding its kickoff meeting on Thursday, April 29th at 5:45 p.m. When asked if there were any new faces on the subcommittee, Mr. Throop told the members he was excited to say Mr. Kelly and Mr. Zeller from the Master Plan Steering Committee, Matt Waitkins from the Planning Board would be involved as well as Ms. Dietsch, Chair Sterling, David Drasba, Mark Hatcher, Akhil Garland, Joe Ierna, Laura Gingras, Andrea Caswell and a representative from New Hampshire Ball Bearings (NHBB). Mr. Throop noted the kickoff meeting would most likely include electing a Chairman and setting the meeting schedule. Ms. Miller suggested approaching Burt Broderick (NHBB) as a potential member. Chair Sterling interjected “I hope it goes outstandingly!”

Ms. Dietsch asked if some sort of certificate of recognition could be created and presented to individuals who have quietly assisted the members in various different way (Greg Scerbinski for his assistance with the website and Tom Strickland for his generosity in the Map-athon project. With a smile Ms. Miller interjected “we could offer them complimentary membership to the EDA.”

As Chair Sterling asked about an update on the Broadband Working Group Ms. Dietsch interjected some breaking news about a Comcast merger announcement that they should follow up on. Mr. Throop noted his focus recently had been on Town Meeting. A brief discussion about potential leverage items (20-per square mile and the outcome of the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) amendment at Town Meeting) in contract negotiations with Comcast followed. From the audience Dennis Callcut spoke briefly about a federal grant his company had applied for (one million dollars a year over four years) to work on a system of care for kids

with emotional and behavioral health needs. “We will know in September if we got it” he said adding “and it will result in better services and better training.” He went on to speak briefly about a collaboration with Antioch PhD fellowships (none sanctioned by the American Psychological Association (APA) exist presently) and the potential of them putting their roots down in this area. “It is home-based therapy that would likely kickoff in the Jaffrey –Rindge School District “ adding “one in four adults have diagnosed mental health issues. With children it is one in five.”

He told the members “once the four years is up the money would cease, but our hope is we have built the sustainability to carry it forward after those four years if we get it.” Mr. Carpenter asked Mr. Calcutt if he was familiar with the Broderick Group.

Future Meeting Topics/Speakers:

Noting the dams in town, Ms. Miller suggested a speaker on hydropower would be interesting and informative.

Ms. Dietsch noted the topic for Community Conversation on May 10th “is about welcoming strangers, perhaps those returning from incarcerations or refugees. How we welcome people into the community” she said. She went on to say “it is who I call the *invisible* people in Peterborough. The renters or those less well-off that exist around the edges.” A brief discussion about becoming a Welcoming City (no official ones in New Hampshire) followed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Next Meeting:

May 24, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant