

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

June 27, 2017

MINUTES

Present: James Kelly, George Sterling, Barbara Miller, Martha Schaefer and Jerry Galus

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

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m. with introductions from the Members and audience.

Minutes:

Minutes of May 23, 2017 continued

Review of EDA Goals & Objectives Status:

Continued

Welcome Team Update:

Karen Hatcher gave a brief update of the Team's efforts. "It has been awhile" she said as she recognized the local businesses for their generous contribution to the gift baskets that are given to new residents at the *Meet and Greet* events.

Ms. Hatcher told the members and audience the next event was scheduled for August and would be held at Bass Hall at the Monadnock Center for History & Culture with activities inside and out. She told the group that since their start in September of last year they've had 61 requests for home visits. "We have made 41 visits, have 8 pending and have had 5 withdrawn or had no response once contacted" she said. As she distributed the flyer for the next event Ms. Hatcher noted they had initially ordered 100 baskets and 46 businesses and professional services have contributed to them. "To be in the basket, you must contribute something of value" she said. Ms. Dietsch noted the flyer has been posted on the EDA Website and well as the EDA Facebook Page. Concluding Ms. Hatcher noted the formula was working and they hoped to get more town department involved. "All are welcome" she said adding "other than that it is business as usual." A brief discussion about use of the Town's mailing (email) list and other opportunities for exposure as well as how to connect with new families renting in town followed. Ms. Hatcher concluded by noting after a presentation she'd given the town of Jaffrey has decided to form a Welcome Team as well.

Relocation Guide Advertising Update:

Continued

EDA Website Adverting Update:

Continued

Employers' Forum:

Mr. Galus gave a brief review of the Employers' forum held June 20th and hosted by New Hampshire Ball Bearing. "There were 20-25 people there" he said adding "Rivermead, NHBB, Millipore, Scott Farrar and Con-Val, Conant and Mascenic School Districts as well as a representative from the Community College System. You name it they were there."

Mr. Galus told the members the forum was a success "so much so we want to do it again." He noted they discussed pertinent issues (finding, training, and paying the workforce) and their successes and failures. "Everyone seemed very enthusiastic, we'd like to get together for an entire morning or afternoon" he said. Mr. Galus concluded that the forum was truly embraced and a success. "It is not a meeting unless you come away with action items (which we did). Otherwise it is just a social event" he said. He told the members the RiverMead Retirement Community had offered to host the next meeting. When Mr. Kelly asked if the EDA members were invited Mr. Galus replied that he, Mr. Throop and Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett had attended the forum "but we hesitate to have it become a 10-member EDA meeting with no one else. We need to balance this thing out with large manufacturers, education and healthcare representatives." Mr. Kelly noted his interest stemmed from his connection with the MAxT and Master Class. "We would like to connect up with this" he said. Mr. Galus replied "yes, of course, we just need to maintain a balance."

Master Plan Chapter Updates:

Mr. Throop told the members two chapter updates (Economic Vitality and Housing) were in progress. "The Economic Vitality Chapter is mostly completed and sitting with me at this point" he said adding "we hope to wrap that up in the next two weeks."

Mr. Throop went on to note the Housing Chapter subcommittee was meeting every two weeks and were well into the *getting up to speed* mode. He told the members a representative from New Hampshire Financial Authority will be a featured speaker at a future meeting. "The group is entertaining creative solution to the housing issues, discussing what other towns are doing to address the problems and reviewing the results from a Housing Questionnaire distributed throughout the *Thing in the Spring* weekend (an affordable arts fair attracting artists and musicians, young and old) two weeks ago."

EDA Resource Discussion:

Continued

Other Business:

Chair Sterling recognized Martha Eichler who spoke about the Fill the Void campaign at the Contoocook Valley High School. "We have been following your meetings" she said as she quoted a newspaper article from March about Peterborough being a major destination for the arts. Ms. Eichler told the members *Fill the Void* was started about five years ago when a band of people got together and recognized the need for a performing arts center. "Con-Val was built in 1970 without a performance theater. They took a lecture hall (the Lucy Hurlin Theater) and made it 200-seat facility but it is not a theater." She explained "there is no back stage, no storage, wings or Green room. It is kind of a jury-rigged facility." Ms. Eichler went on to tell the members wheelchair accessibility was achieved via the cafeteria facility and that music concerts were held in the gymnasium "which is not conducive to concerts" and that the lighting and sound

systems were rented for the events. She spoke briefly of other organizations that would benefit from a performing arts center (including Monadnock Music and local dance companies).

Ms. Eichler concluded by noting the local Arts and Economic Prosperity data collected in partnership with Americans for the Arts shows that arts and culture are significant contributors to the local economy and quality of life in the Monadnock region. She noted the data had been collected in 2008 and again in 2016 with similar results.

From the audience Board of Selectman Liaison Barbara Miller asked, “and am I correct in saying the estimated cost of the performance center was 11 million dollars?” Ms. Eichler replied “yes, we had an architectural feasibility study, but that is high end with everything we could possibly wish for.” Ms. Miller stood and recognized Peterborough as a performing arts community. She then said “I don’t want to dampen your efforts but quality performances do not come to High Schools. High School Campuses do *not* say quality.”

“Oh that is not true” replied Ms. Eichler as she cited Stockbridge Theater at Pinkerton Academy as a fine example of a high quality theater and a “build it with quality and they will use it” persona.

Peterborough Chamber of Commerce’s Sean Ryan spoke of the performance center from another perspective. “At any time 85% of actors can be unemployed but learning sound systems, lighting and back drops is a technical trade.” He spoke of how this was the late Dan McLeod’s vision and how the Palace Theater’s Peter Ramsey has picked up where Dan left off. “The educational value in supporting programming is very important” he concluded.

Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Eichler if she was aware of the Library’s plans for the future with Ms. Eichler replying she was. “We are all competing for the same monies” she said. “That was my point” replied Mr. Kelly.

Chair Sterling interjected “the remaining items (relocation guide and website advertising and the EDA Resources discussion) are budgetary” and asked Mr. Throop his thoughts on continuing the meeting to a date and time certain. The members tentatively agreed to Thursday, June 29th at 7:30 a.m. Chair Sterling requested Mr. Throop poll the members for a healthy attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

Next Meetings:

June 29, 2017 at 7:30 a.m. and July 25, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant