

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

October 24, 2017

MINUTES

Present: George Sterling, Chubb Whitten, Adam Hamilton, Martha Schaefer, James Kelly, Jerry Galus and Dave Smith

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

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:30 beginning with introductions.

Minutes:

A motion was made//seconded (Kelly/Smith) to approve the Minutes of August 29, 2017 and September 26, 2017 as written with all in favor.

Budget Review:

Mr. Throop projected the budget for review. This basically consisted of the EDA budget of \$5000 (of which \$395.77 has been spent on miscellaneous items) and the warrant article appropriation of \$70,000 for consultant's position. "Today's agenda has a number of budget items on it" said Mr. Throop. Ms. Dietsch corrected one item for \$99.00

Welcome Team Request for Funds - Vote:

Karen Hatcher recapped the Committee's first year of successes with three *Meet & Greet* events and over 80 home visits to new residents. "There are over fifty businesses and organizations involved in the welcome baskets and we have had great feedback from both the businesses and the community" she said. She noted the time had come to reorder baskets and replenish the mailing and supplies budget. "This is a pretty efficient little machine running on \$2,500" she said adding "and we are actually only asking for \$2,100 as we crossed the fiscal year with the August *Meet & Greet*, that is what I am asking."

Ms. Schaefer congratulated the Welcome Team for their work but noted she found it difficult to find their information on the town website. "Well that is an excellent segue to the town website redesign project" replied Ms. Hatcher with a smile. A brief discussion about the unit price of the baskets (at cost of \$16.50 each) and potential for basket donations followed.

A motion was made//seconded (Kelly/Galus) to approve \$2,100.00 to the Peterborough Welcome Team to continue their events and purchase supplies with all in favor.

EDA Strategic Planning Subcommittee Update:

Jeanne Dietsch began with a Powerpoint presentation of accomplishments since 2015 (inception), current urgent items and finally action items for EDA members.

Accomplishments: Broadband and telecommuter information gathered, print brochure on moving to town, website and web video, establishment of the Welcome Team, interactive meetings with local businesses and the allocation of \$70,000 at the annual Town Meeting to fund EDA projects.

Ms. Dietsch told the members a Senate Bill (SB 170, allowing municipalities to bond broadband) was being updated and would be presented for vote this November. “It just might pass” she said. She also updated the members on a hearing with Senator Maggie Hassan, representatives from the FCC, University of New Hampshire and Telecom, and Peterborough’s own Tom Strickland and told them “we now have a bipartisan group in the senate trying to get dollars for broadband.” She also noted the FCC maps (based on census block) showed our service area met requirements “so we are considered covered, we are shown as covered” she said and urged people to contact broadbandfail@fcc.gov to take action to get New Hampshire broadband service.

In addition to the broadband lobbying Ms. Dietsch also noted activities “*in progress*” including increasing tourism, reducing the commercial vacancy rates in town, attracting and keeping talent in town, branding and social media and ongoing economic development.

Current Urgent Items: Ms. Dietsch advocated the conversion of downtown spaces (formerly office) to residential spaces, refining the branding and raising visibility with marketing materials, encouraging (and developing) workforce housing, ongoing broadband lobbying and protecting the quality of life in town with appropriate zoning regulations.

Action Items: Ms. Dietsch urged attendance at the special Town Meeting Thursday at 7:00 p.m. for the adoption of a South Peterborough Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) and again reminded the members to spread the word and contribute to the FCC crowd-sourced telecom quality map by contacting them at the broadbandfail@fcc.gov email address.

Chubb Whitten told the members he’d met with New Hampshire Community College Chancellor Ross Gittell and that a Purchase & Sales agreement had been signed in mid-August by Nashua Community College President Lucille Jordan. “Since then I received word from Ross that they are postponing their decision on

Peterborough. He told me the Community College System was experiencing declined enrollment due to full time employment out of High School system wide and asked us to go back through the plan and process we just completed. We are back to square one.” Mr. Whitten added “since then the space I have reserved for them for close to two years was put on the market and I have two proposals on it.” He went on to tell the members he would still have space for the satellite campus as he was closing on the former EMS building in two weeks. “I will continue to work on this but I am discouraged. That is the full report” he said. Ms. Dietsch interjected Franklin Pierce University’s willingness to work with the town. “They are eager to work with us any way they can” she said.

Ms. Hatcher asked about any other sorts of public campaign with Ms. Dietsch replying she intended to write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper (as well as the press in Coos County) urging support.

Mr. Whitten asked about recent digging by FirstLight (providers of high speed fiber optic networks) on Route 202 North .A brief discussion about the company followed.

RFQ Recommendations:

Mr. Throop noted the RFQ Subcommittee (consisting of himself, Mr. Galus, Ms. Dietsch, Mr. Hamilton, Mss. Dietsch and Mr Smith) had met and reviewed the proposals. “We have interviewed all but one” he said adding “and we are ready to make a recommendation, at least a preliminary one.”

Mr. Throop reviewed the RFQ *Goals*: Refine and expand business outreach; reduce the time it takes to fill workforce positions; develop programs and strategies for employee retainment; increase the number of high school graduates entering local employment career tracks; continue to attract, retain and develop a skilled workforce; and develop and track performance metrics to assess the success of our efforts.

He went on to review the *RFQ Responses and Recommendations*: He began with listing the responders as Mary Lou O’Neil, Go Monadnock, Fire Brand International and Hinkley Allen. He noted recommendations for developing contracts with Mary Lou O’Neil and Fire Brand Internatinal at this time for the following reasons:

Mary Lou O’Neil is retired from the local school system and has an understanding of the employment challenges facing by local employers. She has worked one-on-one with employers and school systems to develop internship programs that lead to

full time employment. She is the good candidate to work with employers and schools to develop programs to help students be prepared to enter the local workforce and to build awareness amongst the student and parents alike of available employment career paths as an alternative to college.

Fire Brand International offers expertise and skills in marketing and branding and in developing strategies to effectively recruit a workforce with targeted skills as well as professional and entrepreneurial candidates. The firm has an extensive network of contacts in the state and can research existing initiatives related to the workforce development and retention, with the goal of leveraging existing state and regional efforts and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Lastly, the firm proposes to help develop and track performance metrics and evaluate the success of the EDA efforts.

Mr. Throop also noted the subcommittee thought Go Monadnock brought something to the table but their involvement might come later in the process.

Ms. Schaefer asked about the time frame involved with Mr. Throop replying there was a time sensitivity to move forward with the next step in the workforce development program, to schedule their third in a series of Employer/Educator Forums. “Before Thanksgiving” interjected Mr. Galus. “He noted that a detailed work plan is forthcoming, but there is a need to make initial funds available through a preliminary allocation to keep the process moving.”

Ms. Hatcher suggested the subcommittee look at the Cheshire Career Center (a regional career and technical education center) at Keene High School as a school model. “They have multiple programs including automotive, culinary, cosmetology, construction trades to name a few” she said. Mr. Galus replied “that is an excellent suggestion, we will follow up on it.” Mr. Throop asked the EDA to consider the following following motions:

Authorization by the EDA to initially allocate up to \$10,000 to be used in FY 2018 to hire a consultant to work with schools and employers to develop and implement programs that will increase the flow of students into career tracks offered by local employers;

and

Authorization by the EDA to initially allocate up to \$10,000 to be used in FY 2018 to hire a consultant to assist with developing strategies, branding, and marketing to attract, recruit and retain skilled, professional and entrepreneurial workforces.

Mr. Throop assured the members no funds would be spent until work plans and contracts had been approved by the Town Administrator and were in place. Mr. Whitten asked where the funds were coming from with Mr. Throop replying “the \$70,000 allocated at Town Meeting.” He also reminded the members “this is an initial request.”

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Smith) to approve the two authorization requests as stated by Mr. Throop with all in favor.

A brief discussion about how to move forward followed (defining narrow versus broad tasks) as well as moving forward with the third Business Forum. Noting the lack of basic “soft” skills from kids coming out of the schools, Ms. Dietsch noted “we need a charge with someone with school knowledge, that charge should be Mary Lou O’Neil. We also need to give a commitment.” Mr. Galus interjected “at the next forum we can announce we have the nuts and bolts and we are in the weeds of a program.” “That is good because we running out of volunteer energy” interjected Ms. Dietsch. Mr. Galus concluded “what needs to be determined is how best to accomplish the goal while working with the schools.”

Town Website Redesign Project:

Projecting the current home page of the Town’s website Mr. Throop reiterated concerns expressed that the site was busy and it was difficult to locate things. He pointed out the platform the current site sits on (GovOffice) and told the members “the revamp cost depends on what you want done.” He showed landing pages of several other towns. He noted the original quote was \$2300.00 but when it was discovered the site had in excess of 300 pages the estimate went up to \$4000.00 for the design work. “The programming stays the same at \$4850.00 and you pick and choose the enhancements (homepage makeover, navigation restructure, responsive design feature and section rebuilding). The rest of the maintenance and operating costs totaling \$8,850 to \$12,225”

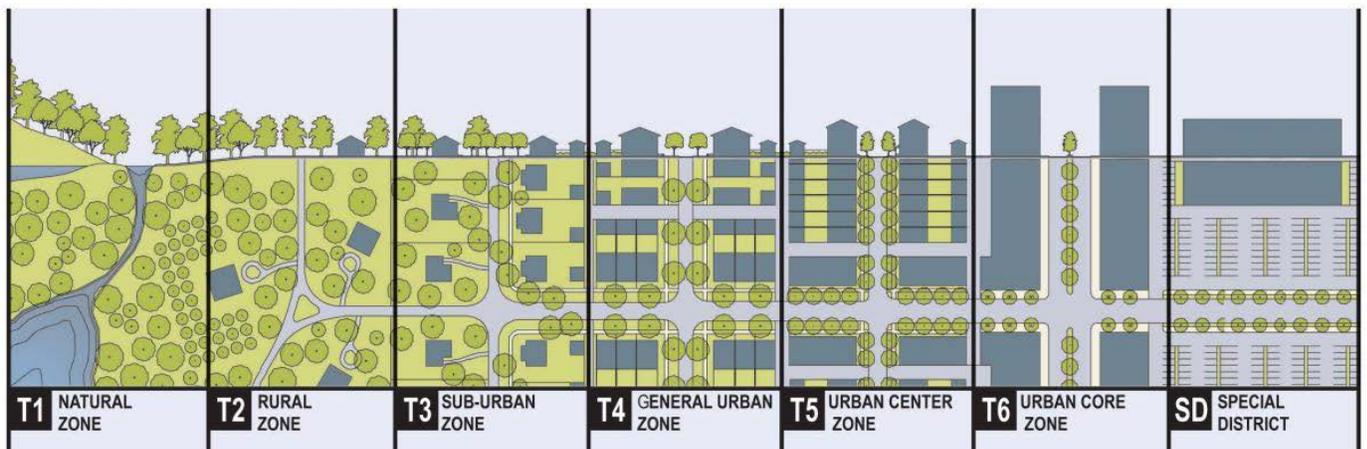
As asked the committee about the sense of urgency (there is no money in the current budget), and several of the members questioned the amount. Mr. Smith asked if they had secured a second quote as Ms. Dietsch interjected “this looks more like a startup quote than a modification.” Website Marketing Coordinator Christine Dennler replied “we just got this, it is vague and there are some soft numbers here that need to be defined. We’ll drill down further so that we can compare apples to apples and come back with something more specific.” When Mr. Galus asked if there was an intention to get additional quotes Mr. Throop replied “yes” but reminded the members this particular quote was from where the

website sits now. “It is an in-house system with internal controls, we do not have a webmaster.”

Proposed Zoning Amendment:

Planning Board Chairman Ivy Vann began with a brief history of the town’s incorporation of zoning in the early 1970s. “Our zoning is Euclidian zoning based on separating uses as far as possible” she said adding “and in the 1980s and 90s we introduced Overlay Districts for protection of mixed use area.” Pointing out the West Peterborough District, the Village Commercial District and the Traditional Neighborhood Overlays I and II she told the members “now we have a really *deep* pile of zoning.” She told the members a Zoning Amendment Subcommittee (including herself, Mr. Throop, Kristin Bixby, Bob Holt and Karen Fitzgerald) had formed and had been meeting on a consistent basis. She noted the Planning Board sponsored zoning workshops (next one is November 27 at 6:00 p.m.) had been put together because this spring the Congress for the New Urbanism released templates that include descriptions of buildings and places typically found in New England and allow you to use them to develop a form based code.” (New Urbanism is a planning and development approach based on the principles of how cities and towns had been built for the last several centuries: walkable blocks and streets, housing and shopping in close proximity, and accessible public spaces.) In other words: New Urbanism focuses on human-scaled urban design. The principles developed to offer alternatives to the sprawling, single-use, low-density patterns typical of post-WWII development, which have been shown to inflict negative economic, health, and environmental impacts on communities.

From the Congress for the New Urbanism Ms. Vann then introduced new Zones for Peterborough:



Ms. Vann told the members “we’d like to create a friendly, economically viable place where zoning is more a gradient.” On a graphic, she pointed out several zones including *natural* (nothing, conservation lands), *rural* (like the current rural zone), *sub-urban* (suburban half-acre lots) *general urban* (what has been identified time and time again as “missing middle housing” including mixed use, duplex, tri and fourplex, courtyard apartments, bungalow and town houses), *urban center* (similar to West Peterborough or the Village Commercial Districts), *urban core* (we don’t have any) and *special districts* (specialized districts like the Healthcare (MCH) or Retirement (Rivermead) Districts). Ms. Vann noted workshop exercises involve identifying the Zones by tracing them over pre-existing town maps. “The goal is to identify where they belong. It is a rudimentary discussion and is part of the goal of what a form-based code is using physical *form* (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.

Ms. Vann told the members “we do these exercises and we always see the same thing (and) we want to get more of what we like.” She went on to say “there is really no disagreement on what goes where.” She told the members the current zoning regulation chapter is a mess. She noted new definitions, permitted uses, dimensional and street standards would be listed under each zone with a picture of what is allowed by right (forms) on the back. “It is a simpler set of codes, making it easier to do things, especially rehabilitation and infill” she said. Ms. Vann concluded by noting “this is not a new thing, it has been around for about 15 years. We are not changing the rules, we are just applying them in a more straight forward way than before.”

Ms. Dietsch thanked Ms. Vann for her presentation and asked about parking. Ms. Vann briefly described her thoughts about on street parking and abolishing parking minimum regulations. “But not this year” she said with a smile. She reiterated her invitation to participate in the workshop on November 27th, “By then we hope to have some sample sheets for you” she said.

Other Business:

Mr. Smith commented on the newspaper article about the hydroelectric plant running into snags. Chair Sterling noted he’d been at the Board of Selectman’s meeting and the testimony “was emotional from both sides.” He also noted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FREC) and attorneys were involved.

Other Business:

Mr. Throop reminded the members of the special Town Meeting Thursday, October 26th at 6:30 p.m. and urged they attend.

Next Meeting: November 28, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant