

**JOINT MEETING OF  
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND  
THE GREATER DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT  
ADVISORY BOARD**

**November 4, 2014**

**MINUTES**

**EDA Members Present:** Jeffrey Crocker, Hope Taylor, Willard Williams and Peter Robinson

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

Before getting started Mr. Crocker noted the last meeting was in January and the Minutes had not been approved. “What happens with that?” he asked. Mr. Throop explained that the Minutes would remain in draft form until such time they were approved. Mr. Throop went on to note Mr. Gregg could not be present and Ms. Phillips-Hungerford had resigned. “The impetus today is that we have five people who have indicated a desire and willingness to serve on the committee.” Mr. Crocker asked if they had a quorum and after a brief explanation of the state statute governing the Board and the number of members currently appointed to the committee that they did indeed have a quorum.

Mr. Crocker noted Mr. Throop had requested he be the acting Chairman this morning and called the meeting to order at 7:37 a.m.

**Committee Member Nominations**

EDA Committee – Five Vacancies:

Mr. Crocker introduced Adam Hamilton of People’s United Bank, Charles (Chub) Whitten of Juniper Property Management and George Sterling a local business owner. He noted all the gentlemen were members of the Chamber of Commerce Business Support Committee and all present in the audience. Mr. Crocker then handed the meeting back to Mr. Throop to review the Alternate Reappointment item. Mr. Throop acknowledged alternates Willard Williams and Peter Robinson and asked them both if they would like to be reappointed as alternates “unless you would like to be appointed a full member.” Mr. Williams explained that he did not live in town. “I own a building in town but I don’t live here which is a bit of an

awkward situation” he said. Mr. Throop told him business ownership in town was sufficient, but Mr. Williams opted to remain an alternate for the time being. Mr. Robinson voiced his desire to join as a sitting member and asked “are we going to be more aggressive?” adding “I want to make sure that we are going to be *doing* things rather than just sitting at meetings.” “That is a great observation” interjected Mr. Crocker. He looked to Mr. Throop and asked “what do you see as action items for us?”

Mr. Throop replied “in the short term I see three things right away, the updating of the TIF plans with the possibility of expanding the Greater Downtown TIF (in conjunction with the TIF Advisory Board), working with the Broadband Planning Committee (as the general feeling is that broadband will be a prerequisite for the future economic development of the town and the Committee could help develop potential strategies and bring speakers to shine a light on those strategies).” He went on to note “the third thing that will hopefully go out this week is the long awaited vision survey which will assist us in updating the Vision Statement for the Master Plan followed by an update of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan.” He concluded “I am hopeful this Committee will be very involved.”

Mr. Throop noted the good ideas that were currently percolating adding “the Maker Spaces and the Broadband Committee are two of them.” He also noted two other individuals, Master Plan Steering Committee James Kelly and Planning Board member Jerry Galus were interested in joining the committee. Mr. Robinson asked “is there a budget?” Mr. Throop replied “maybe.” Mr. Robinson asked if TIF monies could be used at their discretion in an effort to remarket the town. Mr. Throop replied he would have to research that request. Mr. Robinson asked if there was any money left in the TIF with Mr. Bartlett interjecting “I haven’t spent it all yet.” With a smile Mr. Robinson replied “that is the plan, to get to it before Rodney does.”

Mr. Crocker looked at the gentlemen in the audience and said “so you have a good sense of where we are and you haven’t run out of the room yet so I assume you are still interested.” As a matter of process Mr. Crocker then reviewed the number of positions available identifying sitting members and alternates. Mr. Throop reminded him the state statute allows up to 15 members “so you can expand.” He also suggested the members think about “who else in the community would be helpful to have on the Committee.” Mr. Crocker noted he wanted to be clear on the sitting member versus alternate seats and that an odd number of members is favorable for voting purposes (no ties). Mr. Throop reiterated that this was a

nomination process only with appointments served by the Board of Selectmen. "Understood" replied Mr. Crocker.

Each of the gentlemen were asked to briefly speak. Mr. Sterling noted he came to town in 1967, "I fell in love with this town and has never fallen out of love." He expressed his concern over the continued loss of jobs and opening of available commercial space in town. With school closings and consolidations being a popular topic he advocated filling the schools not closing them. "Being more productive means more jobs and more young families coming into town." Ms. Taylor noted the influx of people when Byte Magazine came to town adding "the point is we need to find something that would do that" she said.

Mr. Whitten told the members he came to town for the price "and found a phenomenal way of life." Like Mr. Sterling he noted he was seeing a "frightening flight from this region" adding "we are not a suburb of Keene, we are our own center" and advocated "an enormous amount of outreach to declare we are open for business." He told the members about a second lay-off at EMS (Eastern Mountain Sports) "60 people last week" he said adding his 272,000 square feet of building space "can support 200 jobs but it is only supporting 40-50 jobs right now." Mr. Whitten went on to say "we need to get youthful guys like Adam, they are the future."

Mr. Crocker interjected "for the record Adam is a Fellow in the Hoffman Haas Program and I am his mentor." He went on to note that with Adam's expressed interest in getting involved "I encouraged him think about the EDA."

Mr. Hamilton told the members he worked at People's United Bank. "I live and work in Peterborough, it is a welcoming place. I am the new kid and I want to give back and have the town be prosperous in the future" adding "my hope is to tell the world this town is vibrant and business friendly."

Mr. Robinson reiterated the problem with the vast amount of vacancies in town and the building of new structures like Shaw's and CVS. "It puts more stress on property owners now" he said. Mr. Whitten briefly explained the aggressive nature commercial market and what it takes to fill vacant space. "It (existing space) can be \$20.00 a square foot versus \$90.00 for new. That is the competitive advantage to Peterborough, the reward is the way of life."

Mr. Crocker redirected the conversation by noting "these are all valid points to be discussed in the future" adding "on the table at the moment is the nomination of

new members to the Board.” He went on to review the three current members (Crocker, Gregg and Robinson), one alternate (Williams) and five interested. Mr. Throop said a few words about Mr. Kelly’s and Mr. Galus’s roles on other town committees. He also noted the advantage of having a Master Plan Steering Committee member and a Planning Board member sitting on the Committee.

**A motion was made/seconded (Robinson/Taylor) to nominate the appointment of Mr. Sterling, Mr. Whitten, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Galus as sitting members of the Economic Development Authority as well as a motion made/seconded (Taylor/Williams) to appoint Alternate member Peter Robinson as a sitting member, with all in favor.**

Mr. Throop noted the motion would go before the Board of Selectmen on November 18<sup>th</sup> for consideration. He noted that once appointed the members would have to be sworn in. “I will contact you with that information” he said.

#### Greater Downtown TIF - Two Vacancies:

Mr. Throop noted the current members were Mr. Williams, Mr. Gregg and Mr. Robinson. He told the members “two more members would be in our best interest” adding there were some restrictions about who could be a member “that I will have to research” he said.

#### **Downtown TIF Plan Update**

##### Additional Projects and Expansion of TIF District:

DPW Director Rodney Bartlett was present to give a brief report on the progress of the GAR Hall parking project. He spoke about the topographical grade problems directly behind the GAR Hall with a potential solution being an access through the property directly to the south (the Joe Caracappa property). “The problem being” he said “is this that this project is a Downtown TIF project, paid by TIF funds and that property is not in the TIF District.” He noted the first intent to start the process of incorporating the property into TIF “but then we realized the Contoocook Valley Housing Authority is just south of that and asked ourselves if it made sense to add them as well.” Mr. Robinson noted other businesses that included a hair salon, an architectural firm and a computer company on the street. Mr. Bartlett replied “we need to have that discussion in a timely fashion” adding “but we are in the process of negotiating with Mr. Caracappa and then we will move on to the feasibility study.” He told the members “a conceptual plan had been completed, there are no wetlands and all other estimates are on track.” Ms. Taylor interjected “there is not any shore land down there?” with a smile Mr. Bartlett replying “that is *not* what I said. I said there were no wetlands.” Ms. Taylor then looked to the

other members and asked “do you think people will use the bridge and walk over to Depot Square?” Mr. Williams replied “to me it is not the shoppers who need to park there, it’s the employees. *Especially* in Depot Square.”

Mr. Throop told the members he would have additional information on what the Committee might want to tackle. Mr. Williams asked “if we want to expand the TIF will it go to Town Meeting?” Mr. Throop replied “yes.” “This year?” asked Mr. Williams with Mr. Troop replying “that would be the intent.”

### **Broadband Planning Committee**

Mr. Throop gave a brief history of the history of the Committee. He noted NH FastRoads Executive Director Carole Monroe had spoken at a Chamber of Commerce’s Business Support Group breakfast meeting. He told them she may be willing to serve on the committee. Mr. Throop also noted that several RiverMead residents, John Vance and Joel Hubbard have been very interested in participating. A brief discussion about a hybrid build-out high-speed Wi-Fi and fiber optic cable system followed with Mr. Crocker noting “it is importance to start to recruit businesses and we have to make the case that the infrastructure is in place.” Mr. Throop reviewed the time and money involved with doing “a make ready.” He told the member this involved an engineering study on each telephone pole including “who owns the pole and who is already on it” adding “and many times there is not a huge incentive to make room for a competitor. It can be expensive.”

Ms. Taylor asked about the involvement of the Master Plan Steering Committee. Mr. Throop replied “they will be focused on the vision survey.” Mr. Robinson asked if the town would work with Comcast with Mr. Throop replying they currently provide our cable services and they may interested “but there is a difference in technologies.” He went on to say we would like to invite Ms. Monroe to a meeting and have her speak. Mr. Robinson mentioned the bundling of services may be an incentive with Mr. Bartlett interjecting “yes, but we need to get everyone to use the same words in the same way.” Mr. Throop noted the FastRoad Network being an open source network. He went on to note that he did not have an inventory of home-based businesses currently without service “but I suspect there are quite a few” and a brief discussion about the whole chicken and egg theory (infrastructure before business) followed.

### Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Robinson/Taylor) to approve the Minutes of January 9, 2014 with all in favor.

Other Business:

Mr. Throop told the members the Committee has traditionally met the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. and asked “does that still work?” the members agreed it was fine and the next meeting was scheduled for December 16, 2014.

Mr. Robinson concluded the Committee really needed to figure out “what it is that the town should be marketing.” Mr. Throop asked if they shouldn’t recruit a representative from Monadnock Community Hospital as a member. Mr. Robinson replied “possibly, we need entrepreneurial and proactive members, not someone just to sit in the seat. We want people to work for and see improvement not just attend meetings.”

Mr. Crocker briefly reviewed the history of the Board as being pro-business with the Conservation Committee historically being seen as anti-business “and the two Boards clashing.” He went on to say “it was as though the two Boards became representative of the two factions in the town.” He then noted the attempt to try to integrate the two Boards to work together to serve the community. Ms. Taylor interjected “like recruiting Susan (Phillips-Hungerford). That worked out nicely”

Mr. Throop reiterated that he would try to have Ms. Monroe at the next meeting and asked the members to think about election of a Chairman. “It is very helpful to me to be able to meet with the Chair prior to the meeting and create the agenda” he said. Mr. Whitten held up his smart phone and said “this thing is an opportunity, you don’t have to go to the office everyday anymore. That is not a point of competitive advantage, high speed internet is and the environment and quality of life here are the strengths.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant