

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**November 29, 2016**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** James Kelly, George Sterling, Jason Garland, Peter Robinson, Martha Schaefer, Chubb Whitten, 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 7:30 with introductions of the members and staff. “We have a quorum but not a full Board” he said and appointed Ms. Schaefer to sit.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Schafer) to approve the Minutes of October 25, 2016 as written with all in favor.

### **Community College Update:**

With a request for additional funds for the video production next on the agenda and Ms. Dietsch not yet present to speak on it, Chair Sterling moved on to the update on the Community College. Mr. Whitten told the members Lucille Jordan (Nashua Community College President) was preparing for the site selection meeting. As an additional tool for her arsenal he noted the creation a fly-over video with a drone. “It begins with the Solar Array and the Waste Water Treatment Plant and goes up to ConVal and the Brookstone Building and Vose Farm Business Center interlocking the pieces to see how everything connects” he said. Mr. Robinson asked if the town might contribute energy form the solar array to the Community College as an incentive. Selectman Barbara Miller was in the audience and replied “we are making money but the commitment of the project was to reduce the energy costs of the town.” “Just an idea” said Mr. Robinson.

### **Welcome Team Update:**

Karen Hatcher gave a brief debriefing of the Welcome Reception held November 4<sup>th</sup>. “There were about 130 attendees” she said adding “and 70% of them were new residents within the last year with the other 30% being people wanting to meet them.” She noted the businesses that were involved were very pleased (already seeing their coupons and offers being taken advantage of). She told the members the Team would like to host three welcome events a year. “March, August and November would be the standing dates and open to all” she said. She noted 39 visits were done, happening or scheduled. “Thing are moving forward and

happening the way we had hoped” she said. She concluded by briefly telling the members about a phone conversation she’d had with a woman thinking about moving to Peterborough. “She needed to talk to someone who had been in the area 3-5 years and that happened to be me” she said adding “they are coming in the spring to look at homes.” “Good job” interjected Ms. Schaefer. Mr. Robinson asked about the Team’s budget with Ms. Hatcher noting it was sufficient for the time being. Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Hatcher to speak about the youth program she was creating. Ms. Hatcher briefly reviewed the work of the Marketing Subcommittee as well as the Strategic Planning Committee “and we see in both places we need the youth of the community to be involved.”

She noted her experience in youth leadership training and working with young people “to find out what is on their minds.” Proposing a youth forum she noted two groups “the 12 -17 year olds that are still in school and those in their 20s who may want to come back to town but are unable to.” She noted those involved with the *Broke Art Exhibit* and *The Thing in the Spring* “are the ones targeted to get their input” adding “figuring out the stakeholders and how to do it well is where we are at the moment. *Who* are they and *where* are they” she said. Mr. Garland agreed to participate replying “I can be one of them.”

### **Request for Funds:**

Ms. Dietsch began with having the finished Peterborough video shown with its conclusion followed by applause.

Ms. Dietsch told the members “we paid Steve (Lipofsky, professional photographer) and Eddie (Gomez, creator of Drum Videographics) a pittance to create this and they are asking for a little bit more for the edits, \$549.00 more” she said.

A motion was made/seconded (Robinson/Kelly) to approve the additional \$549.00 to cover the addition expense of editing the video with all in favor.

Chair Sterling interjected “this is great, and they have done ten times that amount of work.” Mr. Kelly asked how the video would be distributed. Mr. Lipofsky briefly reviewed his experience promoting videos as well as his excitement and eagerness to assist. “You can have the best video in the world but just posting it and hoping people will see it is not enough” he said adding “you want the least amount of impediments to seeing it and getting people the information they need.” He noted a simple click to take people to commercial real estate or educational information is necessary. “You need an e-mail concierges for questions” he said. He also noted many still photographs that had not been used in the video and

offered them for use of the website. Ms. Dietsch noted she would be interested in following up with him.

Mr. Whitten asked if he would be able to put the link on his commercial real estate website (he can) and a brief discussion about connection through various networks and websites followed.

Mr. Lipofsky inquired about a You Tube channel adding “I do web work as well and I am happy to help you with my services.” He noted a link from the You Tube channel to the development page of the website. “That will be the portal” he said. Ms. Dietsch noted the efforts to get businesses to link the website as well “but only 6 have done so this far. We need to push them to do this.” Chair Sterling also suggested the Local Look collaboration between the town and Comcast and Ms. Hacker suggested a Facebook account. “That is wonderful way to push it out” she said. When Mr. Whitten asked when the video could go live Mr. Lipofsky cautioned “you only have one chance to make a good first impression” adding “have the concierges or at least an e-mail address to click to ask questions.” Ms. Hatcher agreed with a good role out with a solid marketing plan. Ms. Taylor also agreed noting “a role out must have good information and specifics. There has to be a place for people to go.”

Mr. Whitten suggested the video was a great thing to send to DRED. “This is a great opportunity to show what we are doing to make our town sustainable” he said. Ms. Dietsch interjected “it is another positive reinforcement” adding “so would be the video from the drone.” Mr. Whitten noted the significance of the drone’s flight (over the Waste Water Treatment Plant where one of the college’s programs will be located as well as the building the classrooms will be housed and the proximity to the High School where running starts for college courses will be offered).

### **EDA Marketing Focus:**

Mr. Robinson began by noting the Marketing Subcommittee has slowed to figure out where to go from where they are. As he looked around the room he asked “quality of life? Business retention and expansion? Strengthening the entrepreneurial environment?” adding “we don’t want to market for business attraction only to find a lack of employees, that won’t work so we have hit the reset button.” Citing the new video, the Welcome Team and the Housing Subcommittee he noted “we have to come up with a market plan with goals we want to achieve.” He went on to say “we have not wasted the last year and a half and we have learned a lot about ourselves. We are on the right track, we have a lot of positive things, we just need to start mapping where we want to go.”

Mr. Throop spoke briefly about his involvement with the UNH Cooperative Extension Economic Development Academy (a three-month course to engage working professionals in a collaborative environment to learn and share strategies that are effective in growing and sustaining economic activity). He projected an Economic Development Tools graphic and reviewed its components of *business attraction, retention and expansion; innovation, entrepreneurship, incubation and acceleration; workforce; real estate and sites and quality of place*. He told the members “this shows a framework that I think can help us.”

Mr. Throop briefly circled back to the Community College discussion, referring to a conversation he had with a member of the Board of Governors for the Community College System. He said the member could not advocate on behalf of the town, but that the most effective advocacy would come from engaging political leaders, “as they are essential for ensuring funding was available in the end” he said. Mr. Whitten interjected “Lucille has to make the case, we provide her with what she needs.” He noted the video fly-over, letters of support from the Board of Selectmen, the EDA, the Planning Board and the Town Administrator. He also noted they had engaged Hutter Construction Company to do a full breakdown for the budget. “That is a big deal” replied Ms. Dietsch adding “the money side of it.” Ms. Miller asked about Governor-elect Chris Sununu’s position on education with Ms. Dietsch noting he had just promoted a college tuition lowering program and seems to be very pro-college. “We will just have to keep our fingers crossed” she said. Mr. Whitten added the “2+2 programs (two years at a community college followed by two years in the university system, receiving a diploma from UNH).

From the audience Hope Taylor introduced herself and suggested they take the graphic Mr. Throop projected and chart *who is doing what* “so we can see our progress and know there is no overlapping.” Mr. Throop reiterated the graphic was a framework to organize your thinking and make choices on how to prioritize. Decide what strategy will be most effective and determining how to accomplish that goal. “It requires a greater degree of specificity” he said. He also noted the business assessment interviews would be done soon and that data would assist in identifying business needs and how the town can help. “What are the community assets that support businesses?” he asked adding “and what are the constraints that their businesses face?” Mr. Throop then spoke briefly about the Master Plan Steering Committee’s Economic Vitality Subcommittee’s town-wide forum in January to talk about all the items and get a sense of what the priorities might be.

A detailed discussion ensued about what the town possessed for marketing tools to leverage Peterborough’s brand and how long to wait before deploying them, as well as the meshing together of efforts by the Strategic Planning Committee, the

EDA and the Economic Vitality Subcommittee Development Subcommittee followed.

Mr. Lipofsky reiterated his “to do” list of obtaining a “You Tube” site and concierges e-mail set-up. Mr. Throop suggested they sit down and begin the conversation as to what end are we engaging in marketing activities in January after the forum. “The business interviews will be completed in the next couple of weeks” he said adding “a lot of work has been done. Planning is a messy thing and they have done a good job of keeping things happening throughout the process. I think we will get a good consensus of what the priorities are.”

Ms. Hatcher suggested a monthly newsletter would be helpful and after a brief discussion about its focus (townspeople or business owners) Ms. Hatcher noted that like the concierge service for the website “you will need a person to do that work. That is paid work” she said. Mr. Throop spoke briefly of the availability of internal resources and potential for the Welcome Team’s participation. Ms. Hatcher replied that initially those resources could be drawn upon but realistically to make it possible you would have to pay someone. Ms. Schaefer suggested engaging the local newspaper reporters to attend the meetings.

Chair Sterling advocated transparency, goodwill and trust were the makings of a good newsletter. When asked, Ms. Hatcher noted 8-10 hours a month would be required to create, update and maintain a newsletter. A brief discussion of production schedules followed (monthly bi-monthly, quarterly) as well as who it would go to (resident list, Boards and Committees, Business Database) followed.

Mr. Throop noted the importance of an informed community and its link back to the EDA with its input. “We need town support as the primary driver of this communication” he said. He also noted it would be important to have a conversation with Rodney (Bartlett, Town Administrator) about the use of internal resources.

From the audience Cy Gregg interjected “we should just do it monthly, we need to get off the dime and do something.” Mr. Throop again suggested looking at the budget as Mr. Robinson rescinded his original motion and seconded Mr. Gregg’s.

A motion was made/seconded (Gregg/Robinson) to approve funds for a 6-month trial period of a monthly digital newsletter at a fee of \$400.00 a month with Welcome Team member Karen Hatcher as Editor. **Before** a vote Ms. Dietsch asked “where will the content come from? Ms. Hatcher replied “I have content ideas” adding “and input from various committees with the focus on resident

retention and quality of life.” A brief discussion of the content (resident versus business orientation) followed. Mr. Throop suggested (and the members agreed) to table the motion for further discussion in December. Ms. Hacker added “if it is approved we can kick off in January.”

In closing Ms. Taylor noted the importance of measurement parameters to the Economic Development Tools graphic Mr. Throop had displayed and described earlier. “That way every time we see it we can see what progress has been made” she said. Mr. Throop briefly reviewed two presentations slated for the December meeting which included Phase I Tri-State Ecovation Hub, a sustainability cluster centered in Brattleboro and potentially stretching to Southwest New Hampshire (Monadnock Region) and into Northwest Massachusetts and a discussion with the Affordable Housing Subcommittee. He also noted an update on the Hydro Dam was on that agenda. Chair Sterling noted “I see Dennis (Calcutt) here” and asked “would you like to speak about that now?” Mr. Calcutt replied with a short update advising he’d spoken with Lori Barg and the application for the grant had been submitted. He acknowledged the letters of support from the EDA and the Conservation Committee. “She should hear back around April, it is a waiting process” he said.

**Other Business:**

None

**Next Meeting:**

January 3, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant