



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

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104

August 7, 2018

### MINUTES

**Present:** Adam Hamilton, Martha Schaefer, Jeanne Dietsch, Christine Dennler, Corinne Chronopoulos, Chubb Whitten, Jerry Galus, Martha Schaefer and Nate Morison

**Also Present:** Peter Throop, Laura Norton and Kristin Bixby, Office of Community Development

Chair Hamilton called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon, noting no need for introductions.

#### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Schaefer) to approve the minutes of July 24, 2018 as written with all in favor.

#### **Request to Amend Contract with Firebrand International:**

Mr. Throop noted a proposal to amend Firebrand's initial contract to provide additional support to the development of Ecosystem project. "It is for an additional \$3,375.00 to support getting the Ecosystem Hub and Spokes up to speed, and to recruit new members to form some of the spokes groups" he said, adding "her rate is at \$75.00 an hour."

Mr. Throop reviewed the original contract (Phase I SWAT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis Report, Prioritizing and Identifying Gaps for an Action Plan) and (Development of an Ecosystem structure and adoption of the Action Plan and maintaining cultivation and evolution of a vibrant and valuable Ecosystem). Mr. Throop explained the Ecosystem project was still in formative process and the amendment was for four additional Ecosystem meetings (one of which has taken place) to recruit new members and get them up to speed. He pointed out spoke leadership and group formation had not yet developed "and we need Dawn's continued support." He also noted the Phase II branding narratives and promotional strategies were being worked on concurrently. Ms. Chronopoulos noted the importance of having something in writing, "developing our story to promote ourselves. We need to own it, embrace it and act to initiate it as a subcommittee"

she said. She concluded by noting “it is important to have a narrative, I thought we had a timeline, I thought it was to be done two weeks ago.” Mr. Throop replied, “I am meeting with Dawn (Wivell, Firebrand) soon to get an update of where she is in the Phase II project.”

Ms. Dennler expressed her concern that the original role of development of tracking of performance metrics had (so far) not turned up anywhere. “I am concerned with the amount of money we have put into this project” she said adding “how do we know this is working? How are we going to determine that?” Mr. Throop replied, “that is the role of Firebrand, the development and tracking of performance metrics.” Ms. Dennler noted “for the record I would like to see some way of measuring this *sooner* than later to justify to the taxpayer the money is well worth spending. That is a relevant point.”

Mr. Galus echoed the need for a metrics system. “As we move forward, and the Spokes develop, we still have no definition of what the leaders need to do and how results of their work will be measured, it is like going in blind, we need guidelines.” In agreement Ms. Dennler added “and the types of metric used will vary throughout the project; but will all focus of measurements of accountability.”

Mr. Throop replied “my question is wrestling with functionality of a successful Ecosystem requires community participation and leadership and if we don’t have enough participation the ability to sustain the Ecosystem will not be possible. We have identified communication and coordination as the challenges the community faces, and they will have to be addressed if we want to sustain the Hub. That’s the question. No one has been willing to step up as a leader of the Hub, it is *not* a small job and that has necessitated the continuation of Firebrand’s contract.” Mr. Throop concluded “there needs to be a concise message to those who are going to serve so that we obtain a fully functioning Hub and Spokes to get the most bang for the buck.”

Ms. Dietsch briefly explained how she saw the Hub rising out of the attempts to get the Strategic Development Committee started over two years ago “with little momentum or buy-in from the EDA.” She told the members the structure of the EDA may not be incorporated into the Spokes of the system “but the outgrowth of the Strategic Development Committee is not limited to the EDA (and in that respect) needs benchmarks goals and measurements for the Hub as a whole.” Ms. Dietsch went on to say the metrics *for* and relationship *of* the Spokes may be misunderstood. “The Hub is there as an opportunity for the Spokes to bring forward the concerns and needs of the town. It is an opportunity to connect into

a powerful network node” she said.

Mr. Throop noted the structure of the Hub and Spokes emerged out of conversations with various groups contributing. “All the Ad hoc and informal groups around town” he said adding “and they need to be supported.” Ms. Dietsch added “we need to balance the Spokes, they are not all the same, some are more mature and are ready to move. They are like seeds developing at various rates of growth, some will die, others will flourish but the Hub is the catalyst, the center for communication and coordination supporting vitality.” Ms. Dietsch concluded by suggesting Ms. Wivell identify one or two Spokes that will move the fastest and work with them as others follow.

Ms. Chronopoulos noted the next steps were to introduce structure and maintain well run meetings. “They (the meetings) need to have meaning and demonstrate they are going somewhere” she cautioned. She also urged the members have the deliverables in hand just as soon as possible. “Mission, vision and goals written down as soon as possible” she said adding “to see this is taking root.”

Mr. Morison also noted his concern for accountability and well-run meetings. He noted his concern for the need for a greater momentum and still wondered about the next steps. “It is important to make sure this is sustainable when Dawn (Wivell) leaves” he said. When Ms. Dietsch interjected “who will take over? Who will do it?” Mr. Throop replied, “what you are talking about here is *ownership*.”

Chair Hamilton asked about the consequences of not extending the contract and a brief discussion followed with the members agreeing unanimously they needed Ms. Wivell as a source of support to keep the momentum going. Ms. Dennler acknowledged they needed Ms. Wivell to go forward “but with \$10,000 invested I’d like to see more buy-in without spending more money. That would make me feel better” she said. Ms. Chronopoulos reiterated the Ecosystem was hard work and would take time. “We have to have good discussion, stay accountable (“we are all accountable”) and get deliverables” she said adding “this has the potential to be really powerful.”

Mr. Throop briefly reviewed what was completed under Phase I and what was outstanding in Phase II. Mr. Galus interjected “we don’t have a choice, we need Dawn” and went on to say, “my concern is that we need more emphasis on execution and tactics with definition of executable actions as opposed to a wonder full-blown strategy.”

Mr. Throop continued, “First I think about the Ecosystem and where it has been applied (which) is at much larger scales, regional sectors of larger scales. We are a town of 6300 people with limited participation and volunteers, so I have to ask *is this feasible? Does it have staying power? Does it need to be modified to be feasible and have that staying power?*” He went on to say “the key is that the participants feel the value and see the benefit in it. That they feel that the Ecosystem is making a difference, a metric for evaluating metrics if you will.”

Mr. Throop went on to ask the members “the second thing is whether or not we need both the EDA and the Ecosystem Hub or do we change the membership of the EDA so all parts of the Ecosystem are represented in the Committee.” Noting the restraints of the Committee versus the Ecosystem (with its greater flexibility) as well as the “more committees, more burden on the volunteers” phenomena.

Ms. Dietsch spoke briefly on her thoughts on the Ecosystem “and while Spokes may come and go the Hub is the catalysis for the Spokes for communication and coordination. She noted an example of the Public Utilities Commission being held up because they needed a server and her making a simple phone call that allowed them to be up and running within 24 hours. “A small action can be critical in what happens” she said.

Ms. Chronopoulos concluded with the suggestion that the *Merchant Spoke* be given special attention noting “business survival is number one through the Main Street Bridge project.”

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Schaefer) to approve and recommend to the Board of Selectmen an amendment to Phase I of Firebrand International’s original to include an additional \$3,775.00 for continued support of the Ecosystem with all in favor.

#### **Update on Agriculture Commission Promotional Printing:**

Mr. Throop reminded the members they had voted to approve up to \$500.00 for printing services for a four-color brochure for promotional purposes by the Agricultural Commission. Two conditions of the approval were that the EDA have funds available and that Agriculture Commission get local bids for the job. He noted a local printer had been awarded the job and the cost was \$260.00.

Mr. Throop then noted a potential problem of carrying over funds from the last fiscal year and asked if it was not possible would the members consider using funds from their 2019 fiscal year funds. Mr. Galus interjected “it is printed right?”

A motion was made/seconded (Dennler/Hamilton) to use 2019 fiscal funds to pay the printer if deemed necessary with all in favor.

In closing Mr. Morison emphasized the importance of the Merchant Spoke of the Ecosystem. The members briefly discussed preparing a press release and request for volunteers to participate with Ms. Dietsch noting Firebrand was working on an announcement. Ms. Dietsch also suggested the members discuss the progress the Marketing Committee has made with their goals at their next meeting. The members briefly discussed the apparent disjointed town web sites (not well linked) with Ms. Dennler reporting the Marketing Committee was working on Social Media and Online Promotions and a contract with DRUM was in process.

Chair Hamilton concluded by congratulating Mr. Galus on a very well-run Employer Forum (held at Rivermead July 30<sup>th</sup>). Mr. Galus gave a very brief overview of the Forum with Chair Hamilton noting “it is one of the best initiatives with the least attention.” With a smile Mr. Galus replied, “there is a reason for that.” Chair Hamilton concluded “it exceeded my expectations and it was very well done. Thank you, Jerry.”

**Next Meeting:**  
August 28, 2018

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant