

DRAFT MINUTES

EDC MEETING MINUTES

May 31, 2011

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Barry Sandberg convened the meeting at 8:20 am in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Other members present were: Vice Chair Caroline Amport, Committee Secretary Beth MacDonald, Town Manager Russ Dean, Building Inspector Doug Eastman, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock, Selectmen's Rep. Julie Gilman, Planning Board Rep. Kathy Corson, Christine Davis, Brandon Stauber and Madeleine Hamel.

Mr. Sandberg introduced John Atsalis, an intern in the Town Manager's office who will be working on some items related to this Commission.

2. Approval of minutes

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2011 meeting as presented. Ms. Corson seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

3. Exeter Town/Committee Reports

Don Briselden could not be at this meeting but sent an email and offered the following updates:

Railroad Station:

- Attached is a revised schedule that the committee is reviewing. Keep in mind that it is very much a tentative schedule.
- In discussion the committee became aware that the grant funds will not be available until October 2011 which means that actions that require funds to begin have to wait until October. The schedule was revised to include no-cost actions that can be started and/or accomplished.
- Russ Dean, Bob Hall and I had a positive and productive meeting with the Goupils last week to discuss the property boundaries and to listen to their input. It was a preliminary meeting but one that will lead on to the next steps.
- One of the next steps is to begin the environmental assessment of the site using Brownfield funding. Those actions will be coordinated by Theresa Walker at RPC.
- Bob Hall, station committee chair, will be discussing the project and SST's involvement in the next weeks with Margaret Callaghan.
- A meeting of the adhoc station & west ex planning group will be scheduled late June.

West Ex:

- No specific actions at this time. Anticipating holding a neighborhood update meeting in August/Sept at the Lincoln Street School. Purpose would be to update the citizens about the station project and to obtain suggestions regarding the name and extent of what we have been calling West EX area.

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- Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to provide a presentation regarding the station project and West Ex to the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee. Madeleine also attended. The Chamber's EDC was enthusiastic about the supporting the West Ext initiative and the station project. The Chamber's DECK suggests holding one of their economic focus meetings in conjunction with the neighborhood meeting; say on the same date with the focus meeting in the am and the neighborhood meeting in the evening. More to be discussed with specific actions required to bring this item to accomplishment.

TIF Working Group:

Here is the result of feedback regarding what is next. The Working Group suggests following items are of interest and should be on the agenda for a meeting. (Sylvia offered to arrange the next TIF working group meeting after 6/15.)

- Synthesize what we have learned and share that at the visioning session
- Rank order priorities and set up a timeline of actions
- Set up a visit with Keene
- Arrange for a discussion session with a realtor/commercial developer

Mr. Dean said that he met with the Goupil family, owners of Gerry's Variety, regarding baggage building project and the meeting went well. The next step will be top meet with the Rockingham Planning Commission for a meeting on an access agreement.

Mr. Eastman said that he will be conducting a tour of the town including industrial and commercial properties on Thursday morning at 8:00am and requested that anyone who will be attending to contact him later today.

4. Discussion/Action Items

a. New Business

i. Preparations for EDC Visioning Meeting/Master Plan presentation

Ms. Amport has compiled the answers that she received to her emailed questions regarding the visioning session and the hiring of a facilitator. There is broad support for the hiring of a facilitator to keep a tight and focused agenda and productive discussion flowing. Mr. Stauber asked about the Board of Selectmen's recent visioning session and was told that it was held on April 2, 2011 and was focused on getting the EDC rejuvenated.

Ms. Amport said that she has been recommended 3 different facilitators and is seeking additional information on them as well as other facilitators that are available. Mr. Sandberg noted that the EDC is mindful of the financial aspect of hiring the facilitator, and they will spend only what they need to get a good result, which may be well under the figure that is being discussed. Ms. Corson said that the Library recently held a visioning session and that the EDC may want to check with them regarding cost. Ms. Amport said that the going rate is between \$75 and \$125 per hour for preparation and actual session work. Ms. Amport will put together a 1-2 page RPF-style document to give to facilitator candidates. Ms. von Aulock suggested that this visioning session be opened up to the public, the Chamber, and

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businesspeople in town to get a lot of input. There were differing opinions about inviting too many groups to the session.

Ms. Gilman moved to authorize the Executive Committee to move forward with interviewing candidates for the facilitator. Mr. Dean seconded. Vote: All in favor except Mr. Stauber who is still opposed to spending money on this item.

Jason Claffey introduced himself to the EDC and said that he is a reporter for the Exeter Patch, a news site for current events in Exeter. The Exeter Patch is owned by AOL and is also accessible on Twitter and Facebook.

Presentation: Laurel Bistany, Regional Economic Development Center (REDC)

Mr. Sandberg introduced Ms. Bistany to the Commission. Ms. Bistany explained that the REDC recently changed their name because their work was reaching outside of Rockingham County, so they adjusted the name without losing the 'REDC' title. Ms. Bistany said that she would highly recommend the visioning session process, and thinks that including a variety of businesses can bring surprising issues to light.

On the topic of stimulating development or redevelopment, Ms. Bistany cited an example in Derry where the town offered tax incentives to landlords to improve their downtown apartments. She suggested that perhaps Exeter could look into creative solutions that would encourage improvements for issues like flooding or code enforcement.

When asked her opinion on the Epping Road area, Ms. Bistany said that there is not a lot of commercial development in the state other than in Salem or Nashua. There are a lot of businesses closing and high vacancy rates statewide. Mr. Dean noted that the vacant properties have high price tags and that there has not been a traffic study in the Epping Road area since before the High School was built. Ms. Bistany suggested a visioning session or charrette to determine what sorts of businesses are desired in the area.

Ms. Bistany said that the high tech area is a growing field and that the NH lack of sales tax is a draw for these businesses because they tend to buy a lot of equipment. The great high tech schools in the area also support the needed work force for high tech companies, so the workers are there. Economically, New Hampshire is doing better than most of the other 49 states. Mr. Stauber asked what are the most problematic issues to attracting businesses, and Ms. Bistany said it is primarily money and incentives.

Ms. Hamel asked what communities are the most competitive with Exeter and Ms. Bistany said that Hampton and Portsmouth are the closest competition because they have good locations, available land, and water/sewer systems. All in all, Ms. Bistany said that this area's biggest strength is technology and its biggest weakness is if there is no water/sewer system.

- 5. EDC Subcommittee Reports**
 - a. Executive-** None
 - b. Finance-** None.
 - c. Governance and Regulations-** None.

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d. Public Programs- None.

e. Marketing and Communications- None

f. Business Retention & Recruitment-

6. Meeting Schedule Review

The next meeting will be in two weeks, Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 8:15am.

8. Announcements-

9. Adjournment

Ms. Gilman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42. Ms. Amport seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary