



Economic Development Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 29, 2016

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

In attendance: Charlie Albano- Chairman, Peter Anderson, Ginger Marsh, Darryl Parker, Christine Frost, Joe Mendola

Absent: Mike Amaral and Aedan Sherman

Others present: Selectman John Dabuliewicz, Ed Mical

1. Introduction

- A. Selectman John Dabuliewicz explained he will be the liaison to this committee and presented the charge for this committee.
- B. Charlie passed out an agenda that he created. At the end of the meeting he has assignments for members.
- C. Charlie introduced himself and said he has been interested in having some voice on a committee dealing with economic development. He has been in town since 1974 and recognizes the lack of financial base. He knows of a number of businesses that operate out of their homes and maybe they could find a better place to operate their business, like a business incubator. He would love to have some influence on helping to broaden the tax base as well.
- D. Ginger Marsh introduced herself, she was asked to sit on this committee to fill the slot of the Banker. Ginger would like to see Exit 9 and 7 developed.
- E. Darryl Parker introduced himself, he owns Schoodac Coffee House and he represents local businesses. He is interested in tourism and feels it should have some attention. When employing young people he has heard a lot that there is no affordable housing in this area.
- F. John Dabuliewicz said he has lived in Warner since 1983, he has been on the Planning Board, School Board, Zoning Board, Library Trustee, and now a Selectmen and he has seen up close all the issues everyone is talking about. He said he is the liaison to the committee but he wants the committee to have a free hand in terms of what you decide to do and not feel like the Selectman's office is pushing the committee in a particular direction which is why there are no Selectmen on the committee.
- G. Christine Frost said she has lived in Warner for 5 years, she has worked at Regional Planning Commissions for about 16 years and is interested in contributing to the community and she can offer a perspective on the fact Warner is not any different than any other town. All the rural areas are dealing with the same issues.
- H. Peter Anderson recently moved to Warner, he campaigned for Selectmen and is grateful John Dabuliewicz won. He spent 35 years in the public education field and 6 years in business putting very large businesses into small towns.
- I. Joe Mendola said he has lived in Warner since 2005. He worked in the finance industry in New York City in the beginning of his career, the last 42 years he's been in the investment brokerage development business. He's been involved developing about \$50,000,000 worth of industrial, residential and commercial properties. He currently sits on the School Board. Joe said Warner and New London have the most students in the school district, however, New London's tax rate is lower than Warner due to property values. To offset that in Warner is to maximize the commercial properties to lower the tax base.
- J. Charlie said it would be helpful to know if a business was brought in, how would the tax rate change.

- K. Charlie said the forming of an Economic Development Committee is referenced in the Master Plan and it also says to establish a liaison between the town and the business community, Charlie is not sure how that works.
- L. Charlie read the charge of the committee:
Develop a work plan with sufficient detail to effectively guide the committee's work that shall address at a minimum determining citizen wishes regarding the types of economic development desired for Warner.
- Identifying locations available in town for different types of businesses.
 - identifying existing barriers to attract businesses.
 - Identifying strategies and specific objectives, retaining, attracting and encouraging economic development.
 - Provide a preliminary report on progress to the Select Board no later than 3 months after the first committee meeting including a draft work plan for review and comment.
 - Finalize the work plan no later than 2 months after receiving comments on the draft work plan.
 - Implement the work plan, provide regular progress reports to the Select Board and public.
- There will be future discussion on the charge and the time frame.
- M. Charlie said developing the process of reporting our work should be clear and he has identified a process. Establish the goal of the committee, which is not always measurable. Establish objectives which are measurable, for example increase town revenue by \$500K. How to achieve that objective is the process, it could be marketing or contacting 25 businesses to locate to Warner. The evaluation is simple, look at your objective and answer yes or no. Charlie uses this format for grant writing and he would like the committee to think about it as they go through the process.
- N. Charlie asked the members for any comments at this time.
- John said it's property tax revenue as the source of revenue.
 - Peter said goals are what you do not what you say your going to do. We should be mindful of what ever we state as the goal is what we actually do. We do the urgent, not the important.
- O. Charlie said the committee needs to look at what data is available and where to get it. Christine feels it's important to put Warner in perspective of every place else. She said when we are collecting data it's critical we have a picture of Warner as well as the region. Christine also asked if the committee can have other people come in and talk about what their issues are, like the Kearsarge Chamber.
- P. Joe Mendola said one of the reasons he is running for the House of Representative seat is because the State of NH is graying and there's a way to turn that around. And if we don't turn it around, the implications of that are not very good. He said let's define in this town what our assets are that can be developed. Joe said a colleague in his office has reviewed every exit from exit 1 up to the Vermont border and in the entire stretch the one piece of significant large, flat, easy to develop commercial property is in Warner at Exit 7. Joe said Exit 9 is good but it has site issues that can be overcome. John added what needs to be kept in mind is the type of development Warner wants to see.
- Q. Christine said if you get the data on places where a retail type of facility has been put in and look at the impact on the taxes, it hasn't been always positive. She feels there is other things like the bus company at Exit 7, what a phenomenal place to start thinking about building the capacity of that type of business that doesn't necessarily bring in the traffic issue, be creative about the types of businesses that could actually contribute to the tax base, but not necessarily degrade the type of things that people are saying they want. Christine is hoping for some creative conversations about that.
- R. The committee talked about available resources such as Central NH Regional Planning Commission and the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) to see what they do state and county wide. Charlie said if we can add to that list of potential resources it would be helpful. Darryl said he thinks one of those organizations could offer us the framework of Economic Development Committees formed in other towns our size to use in setting up our structure.

- S. John said obtaining information from other towns on what they had succeeded in attracting and what it meant to the town would be helpful. Joe said he met with someone from DRED about a month ago which has a book on what DRED has accomplished so far, and in there is a list of all the businesses that have come into the area. Joe said he will look at the information for towns similar to Warner. Peter has already identified all the commercial properties in Warner. Copies were provided to the members. Peter also has copies of the Charrette from 2004. Peter suggested contacting John Matthew from RMD, they are the Market Basket developers.
- T. The members reviewed the commercial properties. Charlie asked Peter what is his assessment to date of what he researched. Peter said he was surprised at how much commercial property is undeveloped, but he was pleased at the variety of size. He said Exit 9 is one ball game, Exit 7 is another. The committee agreed. The outstanding feature at Exit 9 is the Interstate. Peter said about a year ago he had a long conversation with the proposed developer of the hotel that didn't go in at Exit 9. The proposed site for the hotel is a prime site because of the lack of hotels on the Interstate from Bow to Vermont. The developer dropped the project because he got tired of the fight and the hotel was never developed. Peter talked with John Matthew's from RMD who said he has looked at putting a hotel as well and found no one will develop a hotel because the traffic count on the Interstate is too low.
- U. Charlie would like as a committee to walk the properties. Peter said the Assessing Clerk can provide all the property information. Ginger volunteered to contact the Assessing Clerk to gather in depth property information.
- V. Charlie recommended identifying 5 properties to present to the Selectmen that have a chance to develop along with the attributes, he asked if this would be a good one result of this Committee? Christine thinks it would seen as a very productive result and agrees the committee should strive for that. What she would want to do is make sure the criteria used is based on the interest of the citizens. Ginger added we need to be aware of the Zoning Ordinances as well. Darryl said the committee should take another look at the Charrette because a lot of work has already been done.

2. Committee Task's

- A. Darryl will compile the survey results for discussion at their next meeting.
- B. Christine will contact regional planning for available resources.
- C. Charlie will contact Department of Resources and Economic Development for available resources.
- D. Joe will research the tax impact of communities that have had particular businesses come in. As well as how the tax rate is determined.
- E. Darryl said having a better understanding of the rooms & meals tax would be helpful. How to increase that revenue coming to the town.
- F. Peter will look into why businesses didn't locate to Warner, what the barriers were.

3. Meeting Schedule

Next meeting is August 3 located at Sugar River Bank beginning at 7:00 pm. The next meeting will September 7 then October 19.

4. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen