



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Working Session - Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 14, 2016

UNAPPROVED

Chairman Charlie Albano opened the meeting at 7 pm.

Committee members in attendance:

- Charlie Albano - Chair
- Peter Anderson - Planning Board representative
- Michael Amaral - Conservation Commission rep
- Christine Frost - Citizen at large
- Ginger March - Sugar River Bank / Business rep
- Joe Mendola - School Board
- Darryl Parker - Schoodacs / Business rep

Absent committee members:

- ◆ Aeden Sherman
- ◆ John Dabuliewicz - Selectmen's rep

1. Meeting Agenda & Goal

Charlie shared two items with the committee:

- ◆ Minutes from the September 9, 2016 meeting.
- ◆ Christine's email summarizing what the committee had heard from Cindy Harrington from the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) at the September meeting.

Charlie noted that at the September meeting, due to having a guest speaker, the committee had not finished reviewing the homework from the previous meeting. As part of the agenda for this meeting, he wanted any information that was to be reported in September to be shared at this meeting.

Charlie added that the goal for this meeting was to have members leave with assignments associated with the three major strategies for the EDAC:

- ◆ Organization & Education
- ◆ Business Retention
- ◆ Commercial Development

Charlie also asked the committee to commit to a November meeting date. They agreed upon Thursday, November 17, 2016 from 6 pm to 8 pm. The meeting will be held at the Sugar River Bank.

2. September Meeting

Catching up with the work from September, committee members shared the results of the work they did.

2.1 Peter Anderson

Peter said his assignment was to assess the advantages and disadvantages around Exit 9 and that he had briefly provided some information at the September meeting.

Disadvantages:

- ◆ Traffic counts on I-89 are not high enough to attract the interests of a national chain. Data point: NHDOT's recent traffic counts report 19,000 to 21,000 as the daily I-89 traffic count at Warner.
- ◆ Low local population. Including Warner and surrounding towns, Peter calculated around 28,000 people.

Advantages:

- ◆ Exit 9 is the most recognizable as a gas station / quick food stop.
- ◆ Two distinct forms of business catering to local residents and travelers.

Peter said he spoke with John Michaels from RMD / Market Basket at a recent Planning Board meeting and gained some good information from him, including that it takes 22,000 people to support one grocery store.

Discussion included speculation about why a State Liquor Store is coming to Warner, when the State had first considered having one in Warner, and the impact it may have on other Liquor Stores.

Peter said he and Darryl had talked about Concord Hospital needing medical space in Warner as the current medical practice is at capacity and isn't taking new clients. Peter shared that information with RMD. Peter also discussed dental care, something that does not exist in Warner. Peter learned from RMD that Wells Fargo now has a deal for new dentists where they will loan \$450,000 to set up a practice. Young dentists coming out of college are not buying all practices because the equipment is so old. John will speak with Concord Hospital about the Market Basket buildings.

Peter reached out to the owner of the Common Man restaurants. There are no plans to build any additional restaurants. He has also reached out to the owner of Tucker's, the little breakfast places in New London, Hooksett and Concord but has not received a reply. He also plans to contact the owner of The Flying Goose in New London.

Peter has talked to a number of people about the value of the roundabout. The feeling by most is that it is what it is and is not seen as an asset.

Peter talked to another guy who recommended Warner consider having a large distribution center. However, he was not sure how one would go about attracting a distribution center to Warner.

Peter also said he heard people refer to the survey about the desire to have more retail space. He believes that is feasible if there are unique one of a kind stores; destination stores. That requires foresight from a developer.

Charlie said it would be helpful to keep a running tab / log / working list of who Peter has connected for the records and for future use by the committee.

Peter noted that at the previous meeting, the DRED representative said the Town is missing an education center / training center. There is no job development center. The other thing that struck Peter is that the committee needs to think in regional terms and not just local terms.

Charlie thanks Peter for his work and reiterated the need for a list.

2.2 Darryl Parker

The final survey results were submitted. He did not know if they were forwarded to the selectmen. Darryl said he did give a copy to John Dabuliewicz earlier. Over the past month, new items had come up.

2.2.1 The Rail Trail

The Rail Trail has gotten a lot of legs over the past week. The Hopkinton Rotary is now taking on the Rail Trail in Contoocook as part of their mission. The Trails Commission is taking on the end of Stevens Trail which connects into Knoxland. Sally Metheany has given permission for a segment to come from Joppa Bridge through her property to connect to Town land. Now looking to get permission from Dave Rollins who owns the Depot Building. From there, the trail will head toward Chemical Lane and Exit 9.

Plans are in the works for fund-raising in 2020.

The Conservation Commission has been looking at a piece of State land which is going into surplus; it's on the other side of the bridge just north of Bagley Field. Part of the Rail Trail plan is to resurface that bridge and then connect on to that land. Very affordable. \$10,000. The goal is to reach both side of Exit 8.

Tim Blagden is leading the effort. It's about one mile worth of trail to go from one side of Exit 8 to the other. Tim estimates it will cost \$1,400,000 to connect the trail. The long term plan is to go from Concord to Newbury Harbor.

The next three years, the plan is to complete the trail from downtown Warner to downtown Contoocook, with exception to the Exit 8 section. Another piece to do is from downtown Warner to Exit 9. Crossing the river behind the Shell Station will cost about \$160,000 to do. Another big chunk over by Waterloo Bridge just got freed up; new buyers have agreed to have the trail go through there.

Some property owners on Annis Loop feel the trail is too close. The trail committee agreed and has come up with a workable solution moving the trail a bit.

Charlie is a biker and really appreciates the rail trail. He also wrote the grant for Riverside Park. When he did that, the trail along the river was mentioned. However, due to flooding, improvement was not deemed smart. Darryl noted that the rail trail is on the other side of the road and was elevated as it was the old rail bed.

Peter asked how the trail passes through Chemical Lane. Darryl explained that the trail runs down Chemical Lane but is on the south side of the river, crossing the river at the end of Chemical Lane and switching over to the rail bed. Ginger asked Darryl if they had spoken to the residents on Chemical Lane. He said they had started to go in that direction.

2.2.2 Planning Board

The Planning Board has agreed to consider submission of a new historical and cultural resources chapter in the Master Plan. This had been in previous Master Plans. The chapter could include tourism destinations, museums, and related things which are not currently part of the Master Plan. Darryl is on the Historical Society committee that will be authoring that chapter.

Earlier Peter Anderson, Chair of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Committee, put out a call for CIP requests. Darryl recommended digitization of the GIS system / town maps, including online hosting of the maps on the web. A submission was made to the CIP. Next step: Budget committee. A general quote covering implementation, data upgrade, and 1st year of hosting on the Internet: \$15,000. Annual cost \$2,400. A \$2,500 cushion is included in the \$15K. It is hoped a Warrant Article will be presented at Town Meeting 2017. There is a digital archive from 2009.

2.2.3 Liquor Store

Darryl attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Liquor Store. There, he met NH State Liquor Commission Chairman Joseph W. Mollica. Darryl asked Joe what the economic impact of a liquor store in Warner would be. Joe

encouraged Darryl to send him an email. At the event, Joe said he expected the store would have annual sales in the region of \$5,500,000. Joe said he had been looking at Exit 9 for years. Warner would be the last liquor store before Sunapee for those traveling along Rt 103 and before Pat's Peak for those headed south on I-89. Darryl also pointed out that restaurants have to purchase their alcohol from State Liquor Stores. So, Bill at the Local currently has to travel to purchase his liquor. Discussion led to speculation about the impact on wine sales at Market Basket. Peter said he was told it would have no impact at all. Kimberley asked if Warner will receive any financial benefits from the liquor sales. Darryl said he did not believe so. However, the Town would collect property tax for the 10,000+ square foot building owned by RMD / Market Basket.

2.2.4 Warner Village Water District (aka Water Precinct)

Darryl asked John Matthews from RMD what he liked about the location. John said he liked that the site was ready with municipal waste and water. With this insight, Darryl contacted Ray Martin at the WVWD and asked for maps that show where commercial properties are aligned with water and sewer. Darryl shared the maps with the group.

Charlie talked about research he did years ago. At the time, there were 46 or 47 municipalities that had water and sewerage. They all had figured out ways to attract income. In Sunapee, they had specific steps on sizes of businesses and the costs for them to connect to water & sewer. He presented that to Warner and it went nowhere. In terms of economic development & expansion vs capacity of the plant, he feels the town did not do well. He feels the precinct could have had higher costs for hookups. He believes this is something to consider going forward, especially since there are 180 home owners in the precinct who help cover the costs. Charlie did note that the town did help contribute, maybe 10 years ago, when two subdivisions went in.

Darryl said that Ray did say that if anything significant happens at Exit 9, a pump station would have to be installed up near the Police Station. Darryl believes the costs would be covered by the development. As for the Liquor Store, there would only be minimal toilet facilities for employees.

3. Knoxland & Brayshaw

Charlie moved the discussion to Knoxland and Brayshaw, two separate businesses in Warner. Charlie pointed out that as an ADVISORY committee, they don't take a position. However, he said he would be happy to meet with the Board of Selectmen about both businesses as they seem like good opportunities for the town.

Darryl said that Tom Brayshaw approached the Planning Board (on June 6, 2016) to discuss the possibility of purchasing three parcels of land that are zoned commercial on Warner Road and building a 10,000+ square foot facility. At the meeting, the only concern the Planning Board expressed was that Brayshaw would have to also talk to Hopkinton since the town was an abutter.

Charlie asked the committee if they wanted to play a role in the Brayshaw situation. A few said, "No."

Darryl suggested that the bigger opportunity was with Mike Jones and Knoxland. Darryl suggested checking in with him to see where he stands with his wetlands permit. The wetlands in question were actually created by the construction of I-89. Michael Amaral noted that the Conservation Committee is asked to comment on wetlands permit requests. Mike Jones wants to fill in the wetlands. The rail trail would go around the outside of it. Next step: Jones is working with a consultant; he does not want help at the moment. Michael noted that mitigation is often requested. He added that wetlands perform a different function from trails; one wants wetlands to be wet to support aquatic plants and animals.

The committee agreed they have no action to take at this time.

4. Strategies

Charlie moved the discussion to the strategies moving forward. By the end of the meeting, he wanted the committee to agree to agree that three strategies would be adopted. They were:

- ◆ Organization & Education - This is in regards to the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) as well as the community. This would involved being educated about economic development and what it means to us.
- ◆ Business Retention
- ◆ Business Recruitment - With two subcategories of commercial and retail.

Charlie asked the committee to take a few minutes to read Christine's email, a summary of the DRED presentation. He also asked them to read the minutes from that meeting.

Charlie suggested that three strategy subcommittees be set up with assignments as follows:

- ◆ Organization & Education - Christine & Michael
- ◆ Business Retention - Darryl & Ginger
- ◆ Business Recruitment - Joe & Peter

By the end of the next meeting, Charlie wants to be able to approach the Board of Selectmen with lists of:

- ◆ Goals - Very broad, often not measurable
- ◆ Objectives - Specific, measurable, tactical in nature
- ◆ Actions & Activities
- ◆ Evaluation

Before starting to read, Peter asked for clarification about a specific paragraph in Christine's writeup in regards to the Caterpillar site in Warner. Peter said the property is already under sales agreement and the point made may no longer be relevant.

4.1 DRED Presentation Slides

Charlie referred the committee to the DRED presentation slides from the September meeting. He asked where the key activities and key words fit. For example, things like "marketing". How do we market Warner? Does it fit under education? Does it fit under the same section as media or website development? That's what he wants the committee to do; look at the key words and activities and figure out how they apply in each of the three strategies.

Demographic data is now available. Where does that fit? Darryl believed all three committees could use that.

Christine said she viewed marketing and media as tools to help implement each of the strategies. Marketing is a task, applicable to each strategy. Charlie followed her line of thought adding that data collection would be another action that applies across the board. Darryl added that the actions are tactics specific to each strategy.

Charlie asked the committee how they want to proceed. Christine liked how Charlie had outlined the task but felt it will take some time to go over the material. Maybe the subcommittees should work for half an hour.

4.2 Prep Work for the Next Meeting

For the next meeting, Charlie wants the subcommittees to come back with the goals, objectives and actions; evaluation can wait.

Darryl noted that after that, they could prioritize. Charlie agreed.

At the meeting, each subcommittee will share their work, educating the rest of the committee about their strategy, opening interactive discussion. After fine-tuning, the work will be shared with the Board of Selectmen.

Subcommittees agreed to meet up between meetings. Charlie said he would be happy to sit in on subcommittees if they would like.

4.3 Brainstorming

Michael suggested exploring one of the key words as a committee. Charlie thought that was a good idea.

4.3.1 Identifying Locations Available in Town for Different Types of Businesses

Charlie went through the DRED document and pulled out a key phrase: "Identifying locations available in Town for different types of businesses." Joe replied that someone - *unclear on audio recording* - had already done a great job of that. Charlie said that that could be added to his worksheet.

4.3.2 Identifying Existing Barriers to Attract Businesses

Charlie pulled out another key phrase: "Identifying existing barriers to attract businesses." Peter said he had already noted some. Darryl added that Cindy from DRED had "access to skilled labor" as the number one barrier; second is access to highways, airports and hotels.

Discussion soon moved to "workforce development". Darryl said it is a hot topic at the State level. Joe asked what workforce development means. Darryl said it includes housing, attractions, recreation, all the things that the workforce needs. It can also refer to training. Christine added that the State is finding that there are jobs, and there are people available, but they are not matching: People don't have the job skills required for the positions available.

Joe said the State has a program called "WorkReady New Hampshire" which works in conjunction with the community college system and is funded by DRED. If someone is between the ages of 19 and 65, they can learn a new skill for free. Joe says no one seems to know about it. He wants to get the word out about it.

In regards to attracting millennials into the workforce, Joe said the Chairman of the NH High Tech Council, Matt Cookson gave Joe an idea to try. Matt said what businesses need to do is pay FaceBook to help get messages out. Trying it this week, Joe put out the message "New Hampshire has no sale or income tax. Come with with us." So far, it has received 3400 likes.

Joe told a little story about a recent visit to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. When he went to pay for a souvenir, the 20-something year old cashier noted the price as being a bit higher than what the item was marked due to the sales tax. Joe told her there was no sales tax in New Hampshire. He told the young lady that NH was excited about millennials moving to NH. She replied that he was the first person she had ever met who was excited about millennials. Joe said he wants to appeal to the millennials and get them back to NH.

Charlie noted that when writing a grant, the first sentence is so very important. Charlie said that applies to websites, too. Joe agreed.

Joe said that in Maryland they have a 6% income tax. He told the girl that if she comes to work in NH, she gets a 6% raise without earning an extra dollar. Ginger added that when she worked in Pennsylvania, she had to pay a "right to work tax", a 1% tax paid to the County.

Charlie said these are great things to add to the website. There are a world of things that can be done to help encourage the millennials to stay. Charlie's own son moved away because there were no jobs. Darryl noted that housing is another deterrent.

Christine asked for a timeout on the "woe is us" stuff. She said she does not buy it. She noted that she went to The Local the other day and was one of the oldest person there. The demographic is aging. NH is the second oldest in the country. However, she said there was so much to work from. She said she wanted to ask them what they valued. She did want to presume that the committee knows what they need. Christine said she did not believe those around the table would solve the millennial issue; instead, it is the millennials who would know how to solve it.

Charlie said that most NH university graduates don't stay in NH. Christine countered that they never did adding that 75% of her High School graduating class also left. It is what people do. She also noted that people come back.

Charlie would like to see good job prospects for local millennials. He would like to attract and recruit businesses that

paid living wages and provided health care. He feels that is one of the goals of the committee. He agrees that Warner has a lot to offer. Christine added that having fiber optics in the town is huge. She feels that should be advertised. Christine said Warner is an awesome place.

Discussion about jobs and the local young people followed. Charlie said that if the committee knows they are trying to attract specific businesses that are looking for specific skills, they could work with the High School to help identify what education is needed.

Christine shared an example of a program that was started by New England Wire up in Littleton. They worked directly with the students to help train them. It was very successful. Charlie said it was a great example.

Ginger offered another example where she talked to the High School about a prime time position which was perfect for school students. The job was 12 to 15 hours per week and paid \$15 per hour. She did not get a single application.

Joe said people don't have the concept of going after the American dream anymore.

Joe said he spoke with an employee from McLean Trucking in Contoocook. The man said they are offering jobs with no skills starting at \$13.50 per hour, full health care, and a 401K plan. If a worker gets their commercial driver's license, they will pay \$70,000 per year. The man said he is working 60 to 70 hours per week because they can not find workers. Joe said he also said if you show up 5 minutes after your break, you're gone. Joe said it's all about life skills, soft skills that we teach kids.

4.3.3 Creating Long Term Relationships With Businesses

Charlie pulled another key phrase from the DRED document: "Creating long term relationships with businesses". Some ideas include business visitation programs.

Charlie noted that Ginger also talked about business leader luncheons. Charlie asked what happened to those meetings. Ginger said they stopped when food was no longer provided. Sad, but true. She said it was a great group.

Ginger said that part of her job is to go out and do business calls. They don't want you there. Many doors have signs saying, "No solicitation".

Joe said when he put on the STEM camp last summer for 5th and 6th graders, Warner Power, Hypertherm and Labsphere were big supporters. He suggested they would be good to talk to.

Charlie said the committee had talked about bringing in the Regional Planning Commission at some point. They also had talked about bringing in representatives from a couple local businesses. First, however, Charlie wanted to get the strategies defined.

Joe suggested that the Regional Planning Commission could be helpful now, earlier on. Charlie said he wanted to focus on the strategies first.

4.3.4 Website

Charlie asked the subcommittees to suggest three or four things that should be included on the website for each strategy.

5. Minutes

After reading the minutes, the committee unanimously approved the minutes of September 9, 2016 as written.

6. Next Meeting

Thursday, November 17, 2016 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Sugar River Bank.

Each subcommittee is asked to bring their completed worksheets.

7. Adjournment

Charlie adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberley Brown Edelmann
Recording Secretary