



Economic Development Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 20, 2018

Charlie opened the meeting at 6:10 pm

Committee members in attendance:

Charlie Albano – Chair

Michael Amaral – Conservation Commission

Sarah Hansen - Agricultural

Clyde Carson - Selectman's Representative

Will Minsinger – Resident

Joe Mendola - Business Owner

Absent Members: Matt Moran - Resident, Adam Bates – Resident, Peter Anderson - Planning Board, Neil Nevins - Business Owner, Emma Bates - Resident

Others present: Elizabeth Labbe, Paul Hagenow, Janice Loz, Bill Letsky

1. Meeting Minutes

Michael Amaral moved to approve the minutes from February 21 unanimously. Clyde seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

2. EDAC Survey

- A. Charlie passed out a copy of the survey for review. A final draft has been sent to the Selectmen for suggestions. Ways to distribute the survey needs to be determined.

- B. Clyde said now that the town will be building a new fire station. It's been suggested the EDAC may take on finding a use for the existing building and asked if the Committee would like to take that on over the next year. Charlie said the Committee needs to have that discussion and suggested when the Selectmen are ready, to send a letter to the Committee.

3. Brochure

- A. The brochure identifies activities which will be the foundation of the brochure. Charlie asked the Committee to review the brochure and provide suggestions soon. Charlie is looking for a volunteer from the Committee to work with him and Matt on the next stage which is "what did we miss". A small group is needed in town, lead by a Committee member to get more information, and to make sure sites and activities are not missed. Sarah volunteered.

4. Virtual Towns and Schools Presentation

- A. Bill Letsky from Virtual Towns and Schools in Massachusetts helps municipalities build their websites. They will build the website and will also train those who will be uploading and making updates. There is no limit on the number of people that can upload on to the website. There is unlimited support provided as well.

- B. Bill said his company only works with the municipal market. One of the things they do know about residents is they are not sure where to find things at a municipality and they have no patience to find it. They try to make the site helpful and not overwhelming, to be able to find things easily. Clyde asked Bill how does he help the town decide what to focus on. Bill said there will be a strategic design process meeting.

- C. Bill provided some background about Virtual Town which has been in business for 15 years in the municipal market. They have about 600 clients, over 90 in New Hampshire. If for some reason they go out of business the town will get the rights to get the code and own the website. Bill explained open source platform which is in general, refers to any program whose source code is made available for use or modification as users or other developers see fit. Open source software is usually developed as a public collaboration and made freely available. Bill said there are a number of open source platforms, they use Drupal which is a very secure system. The Department of Homeland Security built their website in Drupal, so did FEMA and the White House under Obama. Currently, Virtual Town supports over 50 NH municipalities with the Drupal system.

- D. Bill said because they are in Drupal there is a lot of flexibility to add to the package. Bill showed some modules that are no extra cost, such as a business directory. Every page can be scheduled to upload and be scheduled to expire. The site will also be able to be accessed from any electronic device.
- E. Joe Mendola asked Bill how easy is the site to access property cards. Bill said there are services that provide access to those files, such as Vision and Patriot. Virtual will either send the web browser to Vision website or do an eye frame that builds in Vision's website right on to the page. Bill demonstrated on how to build a page with links. It was noted that it appears to very user friendly.
- F. Bill said they can also build Economic Development sub-sites on the town's website. The Committee talked about the site building process which will take about 12 weeks. Charlie asked if adding Economic Development and Tourism to the town's website and additional cost. Bill said the Economic Development sub-site design/implementation is typically \$1,500, a one time charge. Different sub-sites can be added anytime. The one time cost to design, develop the content and training, which can be spread over 2-3 fiscal years (cost not stated). The annual cost to provide hosting, support, upgrades, new services is about \$1,750 per year.

5. Revize Presentation

- A. The next presentation was done by computer display and speaker phone. Revize created a website for the Town of Hopkinton. Revize has been in business since 1995 working for government agencies. They build what they call a one stop shop for the residents, everything on the home page with no more than 3 clicks. They have 1,200 clients, 800 are municipalities., tech support is 24/7. Hopkinton's website was reviewed. It takes about 15 weeks to put the site together, a lot depends on response time from the client, training will be provided as well. The Revize presentation was similar to Virtual Towns. Revize has the ability to build to the needs of the town as well. The site for Warner could be built for about \$9,000, annual maintenance will be about \$1,800. Revize showed an example that would accommodate Warner for about \$6,500 - \$7,000.
- B. Revize will do the hosting for the town, they have 4 servers across the country, plus 2 backup servers. If Revize goes out of business the town owns everything and can place the design on another server.

6. Committee Thoughts on Presentations

- A. There are things the Committee can do upfront to reduce the cost.
- B. Providing templates is a help.
- C. It would be helpful if the town designates someone to collect the feedback and focus it.
- D. The two presentations tonight demonstrated far more experience in the field.
- E. Charlie is suggesting the Committee choose 2 from the presentations and then a smaller sub-committee of 4-5 people working towards another presentation to help guide the Committee to select a vendor.

7. Adjournment

- A. Next meeting is scheduled for April 18th beginning at 6:00 pm.
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen