



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Committee members in attendance: Emma Bates, Nancy Martin, Graham Pellettieri, Mark Govoni, Will Minsinger and Sarah Hansen

Note: Recorder was not turned on during the #1 discussion, Charlie Albano provided the content for #1.

1. Exit 9

As you may recall, back on March 27th, a contingent of the EDAC met with the developer of the Exit 9 properties. The purpose of this meeting was to advocate for possible businesses that would benefit the town, provide a living wage, and not necessarily compete with existing businesses already located on Main Street, instead of reacting to possible commercial development at Exit 9. The EDAC shared with the developer the "Warner Exit 9 Charrette" which was created in 2004. The purpose of the Charrette was to "assist with the sustainable design of the commercial district". The Charrette provides a "blue print" for Exit 9 development.

On October 8th, the developer had a preliminary meeting/consultation with the Planning Board and provided an overview of their plan, which in general consisted of using the 3 properties they own to build a Dunkin Donuts and 2 retail type buildings of about 7,200 square feet each. At that meeting the developer did not have any specific plans as to what businesses may locate in those buildings, and welcomed any suggestions as to what the town might recommend.

I would like to use our meeting on October 16 to start the conversation, with the goal of making specific recommendations.

Recorder started at this time.

2. Ideas for Exit 9

A. Sarah feels a restaurant would do well at Exit 9 but not like a Buffalo Wild Wings, more home grown. Emma said the Chinese restaurant recently closed in Contoocook because they are renting that space to Dunkin Donuts. The Chinese restaurant is actively looking for a space, Emma said she can try and obtain a contact. Dental services came up in the EDAC survey and would be a good addition to the town. Charlie said the EDAC could recommend to the developer professional office space be used in one of the buildings. Daycare is needed. Nancy said the small brewing company that is trying to get established was turned down by Warner Power to use a building located on Mill St. and is still looking for space, but, wants to own the building. Emma said there are no rentable commercial kitchens in this area. She said she was using a kitchen in Keene that was very busy, but, has since closed, something like this could share a space with the brewery. Sarah talked about The Food Venture Center in Hardwick, Vermont. They have cheese makers come in and use the facility and can store their supplies there as well. Small processors have access to bigger equipment and storage facilities. Food Venture will also make your product and they also have a business incubator part that has consultants that will walk you through the steps for licensing etc. Charlie asked if there is enough interest locally to populate a food incubator. Someone said that type of business is maintained in a low rent building with a lot of space. Mark said the developer at Exit 9 is looking for entities that are sustainable.

B. Charlie talked about could the town offer tax breaks to the developer for providing space for professionals (preferred) versus a Dollar General (not preferred). Charlie is a promoter for office incubator's where small office spaces could be rented, they have been useful in urban atmospheres.

C. Sarah said a feasibility study was completed for a shared use kitchen in the Kearsarge Region, she will dig up the study.

D. Charlie talked about putting a package together for the developer with 4 options. But first the EDAC needs to see if the Developer will be willing to work with the EDAC. The EDAC wants to make sure whatever is developed at Exit 9 is esthetically pleasing and well maintained.

E. Nancy suggested a bike rental establishment, outdoor shop.

F. Charlie asked Graham who is a local business owner if he has to go far for specific services he would like to see closer to Warner. Graham said in some cases, they're at Aubuchon's every day. The employees like to eat local with healthy options. Graham said mostly, they learned to do in-house out of necessity. Charlie mentioned a UPS store, the members agreed that would be a great resource. Another suggestion was another Bank, car repair, movie theater, micro businesses, and a fish take-out.

G. Charlie said it would be easier to make contacts if we knew what we wanted at Exit 9. He said he could contact DRED (Department of Resources & Economic Development) which is now separated out and has a whole unit that looks to place businesses in towns. Charlie will contact the Office of Economic Development to see if they have a business locator. But before he does that, the EDAC needs to agree to pursue this, and if so, how. Sarah said should we check with the Selectboard first about incentives for the Developer? The EDAC thinks that is the first step. Charlie will take care of meeting with the Selectmen and contacting the Office of Economic Development. Emma is going to find out about the Chinese Food Restaurant people. Will will contact Salt Hill Pub. Sarah recommended Margaritas too and she will send the EDAC a link to the Food Venture Center for the Feasibility Study. Nancy said she will reach out to Tuckers or Chow Pasta for interest. Charlie said he can contact the Developer to see if there are already tenants lined up too.

H. Mark said on November 4, UNH extension is doing a seminar on the Agritourism Bill because know one knows what it is.

3. Warner Power

Charlie said Warner Power had a For Sale sign on the building. Charlie set up an appointment with the Operator of Warner Power, they want to sell the building and rent from the new owners. Charlie offered EDAC help if they are interested.

4. Mountain Biking in the Minks

Mark talked about mountain biking at Burnt Mountain in Vermont that is very popular and he feels that could be achieved in the Minks. He personally thinks Warner has a lot to sell to bring people in. Nancy said she knows of property owners in the Minks that would be interested. Charlie said the sub-committee is Nancy, Mark and Brett, more input is needed on the next steps. Nancy said she can invite some mountain bikers and the President of the Snowmobile Club. Sarah recommended contacting D Acres in Dorchester, NH. Mark will invite a speaker, Arlin Chaffey who has experience to talk to the EDAC. After the sub-committee meets, they will report back to the EDAC at the November meeting on what the next steps will be. Emma asked where will these people park if a trail is established. Mark said we will find parking.

5. Mural

Charlie met with the Selectmen and went over the RFP. Charlie talked to Brett Ingold this morning, the RFP is ready to be sent out, but where it will be sent needs to be identified. Emma said she spoke with the Historical Society and has permission to build a page on the Society website. Emma will put the RFP on the page and the on-line submission form and a picture of the site for the mural. Charlie is working on donations from the Fall Foliage Festival and Sugar River Bank and he will be asking 3 or 4 businesses for a donation. Available grants will be researched as well.

6. Window Signs

They are completed, Charlie will talk later about where they will be displayed.

7. Minutes

The minutes from September 18 were approved by the Committee. Charlie also requested \$2,000 for the EDAC budget

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at about 8:15 pm.
Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen