

Town Report 2018 - Warner Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

In 2016, the Select Board established the Warner Economic Development Advisory Committee. The purpose of this committee is:

“To support the existing business community and to encourage economic growth that serves local needs, is environmentally responsible, fits aesthetically with the town’s historic architecture, and provides a net increase in municipal revenue” (Warner Master Plan).

The committee emanated from Master Plan recommendations and further states “that an economic development committee is to advise and implement economic development activities and provide an official liaison between the town and the business community”.

This past year the EDAC initiated a number of actions to create a more organized and vibrant community approach to economic stability.

1. The Survey:

Surveys help to determine community and economic development priorities. As previously mentioned we distributed a Community and Economic Development Survey to gain insight from Warner residents regarding how they would like to see the community grow. *Survey results indicated* residents wanted additional small retail, a restaurant, dental services and a hotel. Although the survey response was approximately 8% of registered voters (150) it provides some direction for the EDAC. We will explore all of those services/business as we move forward. The survey was distributed in the Town’s Newsletter and was available on the Town’s website. *We are working to upgrade the website and hope that you will use the website more often in order for you to stay current on community wide activities.*

2. The Website:

Working with the Select board, we spent this last year addressing one of the most critical components of economic development, the redesign of the current Town website. We plan to make it more user friendly for residents and those who may want to visit our community as well as those who may seek retail and commercial business opportunities. The website is currently going through a major overhaul. We plan to make it more interactive, and responsive to community needs. Two new features will be added: Economic Development and “Welcome to Warner”. One focuses on business development and the other to attract visitors, which will support local businesses. Tourism is a major economic stimulus for small/rural communities.

3. The Brochure/Rack Card:

The EDAC has created a “Town of Warner” brochure that will identify and promote “things to do” in Warner. The brochure will help attract visitors/tourists to community

events and help local businesses flourish. We plan to have the rack card printed and distributed this spring.

4. Community Presentation

This past November the EDAC discussed our mission at the Town Hall in an open forum, in an effort to educate the community about what we plan to accomplish. Although *poorly* attended we did discuss our mission, the survey results and took questions from the audience on suggestions for the reuse of the fire station.

5. Business Retention and Expansion

We are actively seeking input from businesses to find out what tools they need to be successful. We also have made some initial contacts with some commercial property owners at exit 7 and exit 9, to find out what plans they have and to let them know how the Town could work with them. Looking at possible tax incentives and survey results can be a start. The EDAC would like to be proactive instead of reactive to outside business ventures.

6. The Mural

In 2024, Warner celebrates its 250th Anniversary. Many communities are starting to develop plans to commemorate their Sestercentennial. The EDAC has received permission from the owners of the building that houses The Local, to use the wall along Kearsarge Extension for a community mural. We plan to work with local artists in the coming year to develop an appropriate mural that will fit with our history and community. We plan to work with other community organizations to celebrate our 250th. Murals are another opportunity to bring visitors to Warner.

In the coming months we will work on upgrading the website; distributing the rack cards, contacting commercial enterprises, developing tax incentives, working with local businesses to assist and promote them, promoting our Main Street and partnering with Warner non-profits to maximize visibility.

We invite you to attend our monthly meetings.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Albano
EDAC Chair