

Economic Development Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 16, 2019

Charlie opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

Committee members in attendance: Charlie Albano – Chair, Kristin Watts, Neil Nevins, Brett Ingold, Kimberley Edelman and Clyde Carson

Others present: Ken Cogswell

1. Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve meeting minutes dated December 12 and 19, 2018.

2. Planning Board Representative

Charlie informed Clyde who is a Planning Board member that a representative from the Planning Board is needed. Don Hall from the Planning Board attended one meeting, but declined from attending any further meetings. Clyde said he would bring representation from the Planning Board up at the next Planning Board meeting. Charlie said he will reach out to the Planning Board Chair as well.

3. Survey Data

A. It was noted that only 10% of the survey's were returned. It was asked if a survey could be passed out at Town Meeting (no answer was provided). Another source that can be used is the Master Plan and Charette information that will guide the Committee regarding what the town wants in terms of businesses. Neil said he has been talking to local businesses as well.

B. Charlie wants to start taking the results from the survey and start working on it.

C. Charlie recommends meeting with Market Basket to talk about how the Committee wants to promote the town in a positive way and ask Market Basket what their future plans are. Charlie is open for suggestions on what they should do and how does the Committee become proactive. Charlie also contacted the owner of the property next to the Shell station. At this time the property owner is not willing to discuss anything.

D. Charlie has contacted a number of businesses, he contacted a couple of Realtor's and asked them to complete the survey, he talked to Pellettieri & Associates to put comments on the survey as well as Madge Tech. Madge Tech. owner, Norm Carlson, is moving Judge Souter's house to a property in Warner adjacent to Madge Tech. and expanding his business. The house is slated for a country store with food services.

4. Geographical Information System

Clyde said the Selectboard will be meeting with a representative who will provide a demonstration. Charlie said he will be attending. Charlie spoke to the Realtor's in town who find the system to be a definite value. Clyde said the concern he has heard is property owner privacy concerns. The Town of Sutton has GIS as a reference to check out.

5. RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive

Clyde said he got together with the Planning Board Chair and both agreed the size of the district should be the Water District. The Selectboard first need to discuss it and make that determination which has not been added to the Selectboard's schedule yet. Clyde felt it would be good to do before Town Meeting.

6. Renewable Energy for Businesses

Clyde said he has put together a proposal on the State level aimed at promoting renewable energy for businesses by lifting the cap on the amount that is exempt on the real estate valuation which is currently \$35,000. Lifting the cap is hopeful to be an incentive for businesses. Kimberley said this is also for large homes. Neil see's true economic value to this proposal. Charlie recommends having pictures on the website in the EDAC section of all the businesses that have solar.

7. Building Appraisals

A. Charlie has talked to a couple of Realtor's in town who has said they would complete an appraisal on the Old Graded School, Fire Station and the Fire Station on Kearsarge Mt. Rd. and is asking permission to do so. Kimberley said the Selectman's Office will do that after the fire station is emptied.

B. Neil said he know of someone who is extremely interested in the fire station for restoring old windows. Kimberley explained the Selectmen have not made any decisions about the building and before doing so they would like to meet with Charlie to go over the survey results. Neil said mixed uses in the downtown area makes for a healthy downtown.

8. Tourism Rack Card

For 10,000 rack cards the cost would be about \$2,000 printed in color and distributed to 131 locations through central New Hampshire. The card is almost complete. Charlie recommended showing the card to 4 or 5 random people for input. Kristin will follow-up with Emma Courser on this.

9. Web-Design

Charlie, Emma Courser and Kimberley Edelmann met and talked about how to move forward. A website survey is available on the town's website which has received about 30 responses. The webmaster has access to the data as well. Charlie, Emma and Kimberley are also going out and talking to people for feedback. Charlie met with Committee members Mark Govoni and Joe Mendola and looked at different websites. Charlie likes the look and feel of the Hopkinton website but the content of the site was weak. Charlie will be working on the site map, he plans to have it completed in a couple of weeks. The websites that were reviewed are Woodstock VT., Hopkinton, Greenfield and Meredith.

In Woodstock VT, the Economic Development Commission was tasked with a grant process. The Commission is provided a percentage of the town's generated revenue to spur local economic development activities. Within the EDAC in Woodstock, there is a grant section with specific rules and regulations as to what they will fund, Charlie said they are very progressive. Kimberley said there is a difference between Economic Development Advisory Committee and an Economic Development Commission, there are different RSA's for a Commission. Charlie feels the benefits of becoming a Commission should be researched. Neil talked about other resources available such as what can the local bank be doing to help support the community, and making resources known. Charlie asked Neil to send any information he would like to see included in the EDAC web-page within the next 2 weeks.

The goal of the Woodstock VT Economic Development Commission is as follows:

The EDC was created with the following goals:

1. To encourage and help existing and new businesses prosper, create more job opportunities, to become more environmentally conscious,
2. To make this a livable and welcoming community for a diverse, multi-generational population,
3. To promote a welcoming, sustainable Woodstock area,
4. To improve and make the best use of land, buildings and other physical infrastructure, and
5. To develop tools to promote a sustainable economy.

10. Tourism

Kristin did some research by looking at other websites with more of a focus on visitor's and found out a lot of the town websites are geared to the town. Kristin started creating a page for the website focused on tourism with links to information. Ideas were talked about to get traffic at Exit 9 up to the Village area such as posters at the businesses at Exit 9 that indicate what is available just up the street. An actual sign at Exit 9, the location is being dictated by the Department of Transportation and the location provided is not at an advantage for the Village area. Kimberley suggested adding a sign to the one that is at Exit 9 for Schoodac's Coffee and Foothills Restaurant. Neil and Clyde will work on it. Neil said there is specific criteria from DOT regarding the blue location signs.

11. Mural

Brett learned that the mural idea needs to be presented to the Planning Board. Brett will attend the March Planning Board meeting. Warner artists will be sought for this project. After meeting with the Planning Board, Brett will return to the Committee with a rough plan.

12. Business Retention

Neil passed out information on where he wants to see this sub-committee go. Neil would like to invite Stacey Mitchell from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance who works directly with local communities in the late spring to talk to the Committee about maintaining the businesses on Main Street. Neil would like to see the business area map updated.

13. Child Care

For future discussion, the Committee would like to identify if there is a need for child care and if so what should be done about it. Kimberley pointed out another area that is lacking is transportation for seniors.

14. Meeting Schedule

Next meeting is February 20, 2019.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen