



**Economic Development Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2020**

Charlie opened the meeting at 6:10 pm

Committee members in attendance: Charlie Albano, Sarah Hansen, Emma Bates, Bret Ingold, Krystin Watts, Graham Pelletteri

Others present: Jonathan Lord, Ken Cogswell

**1. Website**

**A.** Mike Bergeron from the Division of Economic Development Department of Business & Economic Affairs said he is going to provide some ideas to enhance the Town's website. He said you don't want a website that looks like a Stephen King novel, no people showing on the site. Mike showed examples of different Town websites, he said the way you project your Town is the first impression that's left. Studies have shown if you're too attractive or fake looking, people won't stay on your site very long. You want a site that feels natural, gets attention and causes people to look further.

**B.** Mike looked at Warner's website. He liked the front page, it's simple to look at and there are people in the pictures. He looked at the images that portray Warner, he said the Town needs to enhance what is on the website to have an emotional connection with people the Town is trying to connect with. People in general don't like to read a lot of text. In order to keep people looking at the Town website use bold lettering, use color, bullet items, underline things and don't have a wall of text.

**C.** Mike talked about commercial land sites and he thinks the Town should take a different approach. He recommends aerial shots that highlight the site in relationship to the highway and then take company logo's and indicate where they are on the aerial shot in relationship to the commercial property being sold. Sarah asked if the aerial shot be worth putting on the website for getting people from Exit 9 to the village area? Mike said yes.

**D.** Mike reviewed the Town's website for a single point of contact for Warner, it wasn't obvious to him and he guessed it was Selectboard, he said there should be a name of a person, an email and a direct line. If an important company calls in, the contact person needs to be able to communicate well, be professional and respond promptly. He said that's why it's important to have someone from the Planning Board/Selectmen part of the EDAC because otherwise, Mike said he's preaching to the choir.

**C.** Mike said the Planning Board members should also be listed where it's easy to see along with their contact information. The Planning Board is another place where future companies are filtered out and companies want to know who they will be meeting with. Photos of the members is a good idea as well.

**D.** Mike said the website needs to be good at telling a story, there's a lot going on in Warner, but, no one knows about it. He thinks social media should be used, earned media etc. Sarah asked what is earned media. Mike said it's basically pitching a story to a reporter that you don't pay for. Mike summarized, be patient, take little steps, come up with some ideas that are thought to be tangible and reach out to him for help.

**Questions/Comments:**

Jonathan Lord said he read an article in the Concord Monitor called First Net, basically it's communication enhancement for first responders and they are looking for 16 towns in NH, how do we go about getting that. Mike said probably look at the Department of Safety. Jonathan also talked about getting a hotel established at Exit 9.

Someone asked about earned media, is that the best way to get that through a press release? Mike said you have to have a good story first, what do people not know about and might want to know about, in the regional press. Then come up with a press release along with an image, and you might get a bite from the press. Emma mentioned someone (not audible) that might be a good person to reach out to.

Charlie said when the EDAC was first started a planning document was put together with goals and objectives, he is now thinking that document needs to be updated. A number of things in the document have been completed. A new strategy and approach based on what has been learned over the last 2 years, this may be good time to update.

Sarah asked what other towns use social media (not Facebook) and who is doing it. The speaker said if a Town is using twitter there will be one individual within the organization. He said Facebook is a loose cannon where LinkedIn is a more professional group.

Charlie asked Mike if he knows of any companies that would like to move to Warner. Mike did provide an example, an organic meat market, but it requires 20 acres of land. Charlie then asked what about technology. Mike said most likely not because there isn't enough talent or density for anything large, but, a small entity could work well in Warner. Charlie asked if business incubator's would work. Mike said that's hard to do in this region, what is more needed is industrial condo's for trades people.

**E.** After Mike left, Charlie asked the Committee what their general feelings are on what they heard tonight.

- Sarah thought the focus on what is already in Town and promoting that story seems like another project the Committee should take on. Emma agreed, and if the Committee had a budget. Charlie explained this Committee does not have a budget and was told the Budget Committee said no. Emma said if the Committee could fund raise some money, host a public relations work shop for local businesses and non-profits, how do you put your story out there, who do you talk to. Krystin said when she did research on Bisbee Arizona, they only impression she got of the Town was from an Instagram account. She felt it was a great way to get to know the Town she wanted to visit. Emma said she could handle starting an Instagram account for the Town. Charlie asked Emma to draft up some bullet points so the idea doesn't get lost.
- Sarah wondered if the EDAC could coordinate with the Village businesses. Emma said Laura and Graham from the NH Telephone Museum attended the EDAC meeting last month and talked about social media coordination and both were not in favor of it, they felt it would be one more person they would need to inform about an event and that it's too hard to coordinate with current contacts.
- The Committee talked about possible grants for public relations and also talked about an intern position.

## **2. House Bill 1363**

A follow-up will be completed and will be talked about at their next meeting.

## **3. EDAC - Town Report**

Charlie passed out the submission he created for the 2019 Town Report.

## **4. Harris Lodge**

Charlie met with the Town Administrator regarding the Lodge and Emma brought up the building to the School District as an excellent place for a pre-school. The main issue is the building has no parking.

## **5. Mountain Biking in Warner**

Charlie came up with an outline for Mark Govoni on things he should consider regarding moving the project forward.

## **6. Tourism**

Charlie passed out an article from Vermont that talks about the lack of tourism dollars from the State. Vermont is falling behind the North East States. Charlie is looking for a volunteer from the Committee who will pay attention to everything that comes out of the State tourism office and report back to the Committee on a regular basis along with updating the website with current events or a link to current events. Sarah will volunteer for 3 months.

## **7. Charging Stations**

Charlie invited Green Spot to the March meeting for questions and answers about getting a charging station in Warner. The Energy Committee will be contacted as well.

## **8. Mural**

Emma said there has been 2 official applicants. The person that made the mosaics at Simonds School will also apply with the intent of making it a town-wide event to help make the mosaic. Charlie said there may also be an applicant from NH Technical Institute. Charlie said the Warner Fall Foliage Festival provided \$2,500 for the mural, Pelletteri Associates will be making a donation, Sugar River Bank and the Men's Club will donate and Charlie will be meeting with the Nancy Sibley Wilkins Advisers for a donation. Charlie also contacted State Council & the Arts for a grant and found out the time line doesn't work, the application deadline is July. Charlie is concerned about raising the full

amount for the mural. Charlie will also contact the Charitable Fund for grant opportunities. The Committee was asked to send him any contacts that could contribute to the mural. One suggestion was New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund, another was Weaver Bros. and Capital Well. Sarah suggested a fund raiser at The Local. At the next meeting the time-line will be talked about as well as funding strategy.

### **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at about 8:20 pm.

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen