

The Derry Survey Committee met on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, beginning at 3:00 p.m., in Room 236 of the Derry Municipal Center to continue discussions about a community wide survey. Present were Town Councilor David Fischer; Elizabeth Robidoux, Planning; Doug Rathburn, IT; Owen Provencher, and Matt Cohen. Susan Hickey and Michael Layon were unable to attend.

Owen was appointed Chair Pro-Temp. He advised he has added a Communication folder to the Google Drive. The audio conference with UNH Survey Center was pushed off. The Committee members felt it was best to discuss exactly what the needs would be to obtain the best results from the survey before speaking with the representative as a group.

The members reviewed the compilation of proposed survey questions.

Introduction

It was decided to combine the first two introductions.

Economic Development

1.1 Rank in order of importance the following economic development options: downtown revitalization, industrial/manufacturing, technology/R&D, retail, tourism, entertainment.

It was thought that a ranking based on the tallies may not give a clear picture as some people may not care about certain topics. Some respondents may feel that downtown revitalization is important, but not care about entertainment. The question needs to be asked in a manner that will give the most information. Suggestions to amend the question were “which of the following are important to you – check all that apply” or to provide a sliding scale of importance. It may be that some respondents would feel two topics were of equal importance. The question could be worded such that the respondent can designate those items they feel are important in the order of importance and how strongly they feel about it. A sliding scale could give this information.

1.2 Should the town invest in an economic development coordinator? Among other functions, this person would market the town in order to bring in businesses, coordinate with planning and other town departments to stimulate our local economy.

This should be a yes or no answer.

1.3 It is more important to attract smaller independent business to diversify the business community and offer more choices. Strongly agree or strongly disagree.

1.4 It is more important to attract larger franchises or other business to aggressively lower the tax rate. Strongly agree or strongly disagree.

The committee thought these two questions could be combined as most people would say yes to each of the questions. These two questions should be reviewed again. The purpose of the two questions is to see what economic development is to most people.

1.5 In which community do you regularly shop? Manchester, Salem, Nashua, Derry, Concord, Other.

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1.6 When you shop outside of Derry, what do you usually purchase (check all that apply). Clothing, electronics/computers, grocery items, home furnishings, meals/entertainment, sporting goods, other.

Mr. Fischer asked if members of the committee shop in Derry. The majority went to Londonderry for groceries. Liz advised she does not live in Derry, but grew up here. Her paycheck goes to groceries, doctors, sporting goods for the kids, and sundries from Walmart and Tractor Supply which are all located in Derry. Owen said the purpose of asking these questions would be to check the pulse and see what people are looking for in other communities that could be brought to Derry. Where is the demand? Matt thought that the questions could be rephrased to get an idea of the latent needs (i.e., what to you typically do on a certain night – dinner, etc.) Liz questioned if there were businesses that were lacking in Derry, who is going to bring them to Derry? Mr. Fischer said he would like to know if people want to fund an economic development position. It has been discussed during the last two budgets. Owen wondered if these two questions were more of the *how* than the *what*.

In the interest of time, the committee members moved on to discussion of the UNH Survey option. Liz thought this was an expensive option and given that a phone survey would be conducted before political elections, she was not sure many people would want to answer a phone survey. They are being inundated with political surveys. The town could create postcards in house to be bulk mailed. Perhaps a pin number could be placed on each one that could be used as a unique identifier. Doug noted the issue would then become how you assign identifiers for more than one person in the household. There are co-owners of the properties. Mr. Fischer thought it would be a good idea to know, based on the identifier, if the respondent was a homeowner, renter ,or business owner. Matt noted the UNH proposal was provided à la carte. The town could pick and choose the options. Doug thought utilizing UNH was a good option. Matt said it might be better to use UNH since the town seemed to be heading in the direction of multiple surveys. UNH has more methods to tie the demographic data to the phone numbers and would send out a survey based on a representation of Derry's demographic population. For example, if 30% of Derry is made up of white males, aged 50, then 30% of the 2500 surveys would be sent to 50 year old white males. Doug thought it would be beneficial to sample by political district. Matt agreed, stating that there would not be a good representation of the town if all the people surveyed lived east of the traffic circle.

Matt noted SurveyMonkey can't be locked to avoid fraud. Owen asked if there are other web based survey options. Matt did not think the town could verify the data unless the town knew who it was sending the survey to. Surveys taken on the library computer would not yield a good response as that IP address could only be used once. There needs to be some kind of unique identifier. Owen said the unique identifier would also be the token or raffle ticket for the give aways. It can only be used once. If the town sends out 1000 surveys, no more than 1000 responses can be received.

Mr. Fischer said he would like to see a link on the Derry website that leads to the survey. The respondent could enter their name and address and then be moved on to the actual survey. The name and address would be the identifier and the raffle ticket. If the process is kept simple, more people will respond. Matt said the committee knows there is a risk for fraud going into the survey. It was noted that if someone had an address outside of Derry, the response would not be valid. It was determined the unique identifier should be generated up front.

It was noted SurveyMonkey is a cheap and easy option but there are risks involved.

Tasks for next meeting: make suggested changes to the compiled questions and forward them to Liz. At the next meeting, the committee will review the revised document. The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 26th at 10:00 a.m. in Room 207.

The meeting ended at 4:02 p.m.