

Derry Downtown Committee
Inaugural Meeting
Jan 28, 2010

The meeting came to order at 7:20PM

Attendees:

George Sioras, Stuart Arnett, Jim Browne, Mike Gendron, Jona Bostwick, Brad Benson, Mary Hankins, Tom Hankins, Gordon Graham, Dave Nelson and Susan Kopetz

Gordon Graham stated that he was pleased that the Derry Town Council had designated our committee an officially recognized Derry Town Steering Committee whose purpose is to formulate, investigate and recommend ideas for improvements to Derry's downtown that further economic viability, are aesthetically pleasing and improve the quality of life for entire community.

Mr. Graham made a motion to officially name our committee as the "Derry Downtown Committee". The motion was seconded by Sue Kopetz and passed unanimously.

Gordon Graham nominated and moved to elect Michael Gendron to the position of Chairperson of the Derry Downtown Committee. The motion was seconded by David Nelson and passed unanimously.

Michael Gendron nominated and moved to elect Gordon Graham to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Derry Downtown Committee. The motion was seconded by David Nelson and passed unanimously.

It was indicated that a secretary should be nominated and elected to the Derry Downtown Committee who would be responsible for creating the minutes for committee so that we may report our efforts to the Derry Town Council on a quarterly basis as requested. Nominations for the position were tabled until our next meeting on Thursday, Feb, 18, 2010 at 7pm at the Derry Municipal Center.

Agenda:

Downtown Civic Profile- Discussion took place as to when to schedule a downtown civic profile event facilitated by Michele Gagne of UNH. It was decided to hold the event on April 17th at 9am at the Derry Municipal Center. (It has since been learned that the Municipal Center is unavailable on April 17 and so a new date, time and location would need to be determined as soon as possible). Discussion of snow date took place but was yet to be determined.

Goals of the civic profile event:

1. Get merchants and landowners excited about new ideas for the downtown that could potentially increase "foot-traffic", revitalize the area and increase their business revenue- Theme- Dream Big!! Get new idea's and input.
2. Broaden scope of committee –Engage as many stakeholders as possible. Include business owners, Chamber of Commerce members, landlords, town officials, economic development consultants and interested citizens.

Immediate action steps from this meeting: It was discussed that, while we hope to have most of the brainstorming for town improvements come from the civic profile event, it was important that this committee make at least some recommendations to the Derry Town Council in time for this fiscal year's budget preparation. As this committee had been meeting all summer as the "Civic Profile Downtown Committee", several consensus recommendations for improvements had already been formulated and it made sense to send these suggestions to the council for their consideration in this year's budget. Here are the committee's immediate and initial recommendations:

1. Consider appropriating funds for signage for public parking.
2. Investigate the scope of the Birch-Crystal intersection DOT repair work and determine if the project is aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the covenants set forth in the original Main Street improvements of 1999-2001 and our current vision with respects to street lights, PSNH poles and traffic signals.
3. Consider additional funding for stamped sidewalks down to the public library
4. Consider creating a capital improvement/land acquisition fund in the amount of 150k for future use recommendations.

A discussion took place of the desire by many in town to create a successful Farmer's Market somewhere in the downtown area. Derry Town Economic Development Consultant, Mr. Stu Arnett presented a report he had previously presented to the Derry Town Council on the subject of a farmer's market and what it would take to make it successful. It was discussed that situating the market near the downtown might serve to bring additional foot-traffic and business to the downtown from Derry citizens as well as potentially become a destination for visitors from other towns and a reason to visit Derry. Mike Gendron presented information on a very successful farmer's market that he has visited in Ithaca, NY. He felt that it could be a very good model for us to follow. He recommended visiting their website at <http://www.ithacamarket.com/>

Mr. Gendron requested that each committee member should attempt to recruit one person to join our group by our next meeting on Feb, 18, 2010 at 7pm in Rm. 207 at the Derry Municipal Center. He felt that there was a lot of work ahead for this committee and, in order to prevent "burn-out", we will need many enthusiastic members of the Derry Downtown Committee to help make our collective visions become reality.

The next meeting of the Derry Downtown Committee will be Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010 at 7pm in Rm.207 of the Derry Municipal Center.

Additional meeting dates were scheduled as follows:

Thurs. March 4, 2010

Thurs. March 18, 2010

Thurs. April 8, 2010

Thurs. April 15, 2010

All meetings (except for the downtown civic profile) will be held in Rm 207 of the Derry Municipal Center.

Mr. Graham made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Jona Bostwick and passed unanimously at 9:15pm