

Derry Downtown Committee Minutes
Thursday July 15, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Gordon Graham, Chair. Committee members in attendance were Dave Nelson, Brian Chirichiello, Tom & Mary Hankins, Michael Gendron, David Morris, John T. O'Connor, Brad Benson & Scott Kingsley & Elizabeth Robidoux. Also in attendance were Stuart Arnett & Raymond Gagnon of Arnett Development LLC and Hunter Ulf & Chris Kennedy of UK Architects.

The Minutes from June 10, 2010 were read and approved: motion made by Michael Gendron and seconded by David Nelson.

Chairman's Comments-Gordon Graham welcomed everyone and asked all in attendance to re-introduce themselves and discuss their reasons for being involved with the downtown committee. He stated he was excited by the many positive improvements and steps towards increased economic development that were happening in Derry and that he was proud of the work that this committee had accomplished thus far.

Old Business

a. Update on Downtown Parcel Development-

1. Stuart Arnett began by introducing representatives from UK Architects of Hanover, NH, Mr. Hunter Ulf & Mr. Chris Kennedy. He also presented 4 conceptual plans (Plan A, B, C & D) that were created by Saucier & Flynn, Ltd. of Lebanon, NH. Mr. Ulf discussed Plan A as an additional "surface public parking" option only with no other structures included. This option would provide for 242 surface parking spaces.

Mr. Arnett described Plan B as providing only 170 public parking spaces but would also include 2 additional buildings. He indicated that building 1 would "mirror" the current Merchant's Row Building currently owned by the DEDC. He stated that this 3 story building could be considered mixed use retail/office space totaling 13,500 sq ft. He indicated that building 2 could be located at the back of the property and be a much larger building (part of which could be considered mixed use retail/office 13,500 sq ft and part of which could be considered a recreational center/health club 21,700 sq ft.). It was felt that this would create a central hub of activity in this part of downtown that would lend itself to recreation and socializing. He stated that Plans B, C & D all included a new multi-use retail/office/residential building located near the end of Martin St. (owned by Benson's Lumber) as well as a building that would be considered a "shed" (located at the site of the old Shamrock Cleaners building) to be used as a potential staging area for farmer's market vendors. The assumption here is that the new location of the farmer's market would be along the entire length of the rail trail/bike path area.

Mr. Ulf described Plan C as providing 92 surface parking space with an additional 204 spaces be provided by a two-level parking garage. In addition, there would be a total of 4 buildings located directly behind the Merchant's Row building two of which would actually be situated atop the parking garage. The mixed use buildings would then be situated at the same street level as Merchant Row. Building 1 could be the same "mirror image" building as the Merchants Row DEDC Building with 3 stories of retail/office space totaling 13,500 sq ft. Building 2 located behind Building 1 could accommodate a 3 story 7,200 sq. ft mixed use building for retail/office. Two buildings could then be situated on the top of the parking garage as the land in that area slopes downward. Building 3 atop the garage could be a 2 story 8,000 sq ft structure that could also accommodate retail/office use. Lastly, Building 4 could be much larger at 29,500 sq ft. and potentially accommodate a recreation center/health club. Mr. Ulf added that introducing a business to the downtown that was a grocery market/café/deli has been proven (in other towns) to bring patrons to the downtown and give commuters a reason to stop and patronize downtown businesses. He suggested that various designs could be used to highlight where the actual downtown "hub" was located.

Mr. Arnett described Plan D as providing 86 surface parking spaces and 204 additional spaces in the two-level parking garage. It could also possibly accommodate 5 mixed use retail/office buildings running along the rail trail area with 2 built on the ground and 3 built atop the parking garage. This plan does away with the large recreational facility but adds a possible "green roof" area or possible skate park area. Mr. Gagnon commented that he felt that our town had made tremendous strides toward economic development and that, with continued perseverance we would achieve our "big dreams". Gordon Graham thanked Mr. Arnett, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Kennedy & Mr. Gagnon for their excellent presentation.

During the discussion, Gordon Graham and Mike Gendron wanted to make sure the plan takes advantage of the grade change between the RR/bike path corridor and the lot below. Mr. Arnett assured that the buildings were butting up to the grade change. Mr. Gendron and Mr. Graham indicated it would be nice to make the make sure there was enough space up on the level of the RR/bike path/farmers market corridor to accommodate the bike path, the market and a pedestrian area. They thought if needed, the buildings could be set back from the current wall and the gap could then be filled in, creating a wider pedestrian/bike path/market area.

Brad Benson, Derry Town Council Chairperson indicated that an economic development task force that had been created by the Town Council and was being chaired by Mr. Neil Olbricht of the Town Council. He stated that he hoped that the task force would include members from many aspects of the community. He encouraged the downtown committee to become involved with the task force and to nominate a liaison to the committee. Gordon Graham volunteered to be the task force liaison.

b. Downtown Parking Committee Discussion -

1. Gordon Graham stated that, at our last meeting, George Sioras offered that his office might use the services of an intern to look at every parcel in the town and apply the site regulations to come up with a parking requirement for every parcel and then map that requirement versus existing available parking. Ms. Robidoux indicated that her office would have that information for us by our next meeting. David Nelson stated that we needed to make a determination as to what area we were considering downtown as it related to merchants and parking. Mr. Nelson was confident Mr. Sioras had a good definition of the downtown. Mr. O'Connor produced a map of the downtown area that has been used in the past to be used by Mrs. Robidoux as the department tabulates the required vs. available parking spaces. The committee agreed this data will be critical to the analysis of the downtown parking issue. Also, the committee agreed short term steps were to put the word "Free" on our parking signs. Mr. Benson agreed to speak with Gary Stenhouse and Mike Fowler about what short term steps could be taken in the Abbott Court lot to make it a more clearly labeled, user friendly public lot. Mr. Benson also agreed to ask Mr. Fowler to attend the next meeting of the committee.-

- c. Update on Farmer's Market-**Mr. Arnett stated that the market was extremely well received and came together thanks to the cooperation of many Derry citizens. He indicated that 17 of 18 available vendor booths were sold and that over 300 folks attended each Wednesday night market thus far. He indicated that having the market on Wednesday was advantageous because the Town Hall stays open late that evening which accommodates the needed bathroom facilities required by law. He indicated that he witnessed folks arriving by bicycle and on foot. Gordon Graham suggested that we encourage downtown business to remain open later on Wednesdays to take advantage of the additional pedestrian traffic. Gordon thought that having the merchants stay open until 7pm on Wednesday nights during the farmer's market would create some "cross pollination" marketing as it would create additional awareness for the other businesses in town.

Committee Updates-Updates for UNH-Gordon Graham stated that UNH had sent a request for updates from the committees that had been created from the downtown civic profile event. He indicated he would be providing those updates to them.

- a. Friendship Center-**Tracy Love was unable to attend but Gordon indicated that Tracy had been making strides in working with the Friendship Center.
- b. Pedestrian Friendly-**Gordon Graham indicated that he had crafted and sent a letter to the town suggesting ways to make walking in the downtown safer and easier. He stated that he felt that many people feel that parking in Abbot Ct. is unsafe. He stated that he witnessed "partying" going on in that lot one evening and that, while it did not intimidate him, he could see how it might intimidate others. Gordon stated he had once asked the Chief of Police if they could "walk the beat" in the downtown. He stated that he hoped to address this possibility again in the future.
- c. Façade Improvement-**Tracy Love was unable to attend.
- d. Merchants Association-**Gordon felt that it was important that a viable merchant's association be created to maximize the economic development of the downtown. Mr. Hankins indicated that, while he would like to consider heading up that committee, his business required most of his available time. He stated he would ponder the idea. It was suggested that the Merchant's Association could communicate strictly via email if physically meeting was impossible.

- e. **Claremont Field Trip**-Jona Bostwick was unable to attend and, thusly, there was no update. Gordon indicated he would follow up with her on this via email and hoped that this field trip could be initiated soon. Dave Nelson thought that Arnett Development might have much information about how Claremont successfully implemented their economic development and what granting may have taken place.
- f. **NEIMT College**-Gordon read aloud a memorandum from Jack Roche of the College Search Sub-Committee. Here is his memo:

As of June 23, 2010, the New England Institute for Medical Technology (NEIMT) is a non-profit corporation in the state of New Hampshire. In addition, the new corporation applied for and received an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS.

Once the corporation was formed, the process of completing IRS Form 1023, which is the application to receive tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code began. The 30 page document is being completed with the help of the original incorporators of NEIMT. Once the document is completed and approved by the IRS, NEIMT will begin the search for grants and other funding to start operations. NEIMT is still scheduled to accept the first group of surgical technology students on or about Jan. 1, 2011.

Two instructors have agreed to teach the didactic courses for both day and evening classes. The day program will take 12 months to complete, and the evening program will take 16 months to complete.

The first official meeting of the new corporation was held on July 7 via telephone conference. During that meeting, the original incorporators were elected to the Board of Trustees and officers to the Board of Trustees were also elected. The present board consists of:

Mr. Neil Johnson is the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. He is also the President of Universal Photonics, Inc. in Hicksville, NY and has currently finished a 9-year tenure as a member of the Kings Park Board of Education on Long Island as its president.

Mr. Joseph Suozzo is the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. He is currently the owner of the Suozzo Allstate Insurance Agency here in Derry, NH

Mr. Larry Muzerall is Secretary of the Board of Trustees. A resident of Derry, he is currently the Director of Business Development for Sedona International in Nashua, NH

Mr. Mike Gallagher is Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. A resident of Derry, he is currently a Senior Vice-President with Enterprise Bank

Dr. Phil Szalowski is a trustee for NEIMT. He is currently the owner of Broadway Chiropractic.

Ms. Jona Bostwick is a trustee for NEIMT. A member of the Derry Downtown Committee, she is also an online database coordinator for the VA Medical Center, Manchester, NH

Dr. Jack Roche has been appointed President of NEIMT and ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees.

Finally, the Board of Trustees approved a set of by-laws that will govern this new non-profit corporation. At this meeting, the President reported to the Board of Trustees that meetings had been held with the Executive Director of the Rockingham Economic Development Corporation, the CEO of Parkland Medical Center, and the Chairperson of the charitable funding organization. Parkland Medical Center and NEIMT will enter into an agreement that will allow NEIMT to send their students to Parkland for their internship in Surgical Technology. In addition, Parkland has agreed to nominate a senior administration official to the Board of Trustees. We will also be receiving a nomination for a surgeon who wishes to become a member of the Board of Trustees.

Respectfully submitted on this fifteenth day of July, 2010

Gordon Graham and all in attendance agreed that they were truly proud of Jack for bringing his dream of putting a college in downtown Derry to life. He stated that the Downtown Committee was honored to have had a small part in assisting Jack in bringing his “big dream” to a reality.

New Business

Communications-A letter was submitted to the Downtown Committee by Derry resident Margie Ives which suggested the addition of fountains in the downtown. She felt that installing fountains in the downtown would truly change the ambiance of the downtown. Gordon felt this would be another reason for people to visit the downtown.

Gordon stated that our next meeting would be held on Thursday, Aug. 19, 2010 at 7pm in Rm 207 of the Derry Municipal Center.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Pro-Tem Michael Gendron