

## MINUTES

**HOOKSETT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
HOOKSETT TOWN HALL  
HOOKSETT, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Tuesday, November 10, 2009**

**Call To Order:** Chairman W. Sirak called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

**Present:** Chairman William Sirak, Craig Ahlquist, Tom Barrett, Alden Beauchemin, Fred Bishop, Jack Dowd, Steve Korzyniowski, Paul Loiselle, Keith Moon, Michael Reed, Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner), Carol Granfield (Town Administrator)

**Also Present:** Mike Skelton, Greater Manchester Chambers of Commerce, and Richard Sullivan

**Approval of October 14, 2009 Minutes**

The minutes are approved as presented.

**Ambassador's Program**

Fred Bishop, Chair updated the committee on the Ambassador's Program. The program has about 60 businesses on Phase 1 contact list in addition to the businesses that attended the initial focus group meetings. 23 businesses have been completed, 6 are in the process, 2 have declined to meet with the group, 3 are no longer in business and 26 businesses with no reports at all. The group is way behind on their planned businesses visits. There are 106 companies on Phase 2 list. 19 restaurants as well as Childcare Centers are not on the lists.

- Paradigm Plumbing & Heating was interviewed. The owner, a resident in Town has only positive comments for Hooksett. He praised the Building Department and added that people at the Town Hall are friendly and helpful.
- A follow-up meeting will be scheduled with Palazzi Corp.
- Chair Sirak and the Town Administrator would like to meet with Mow Town to reach out and offer assistance with the recent fire.
- SNHU was interviewed.
- A visit with the Elliot Health Care as well as Stillwater Properties will be scheduled.
- Union Leader and Hooksett Banner will feature an article on the Ambassador's Program.

J. Duffy expressed concerns with the number of empty sites on Hooksett Road. She spoke to the developers for the former Walmart site. She thinks they are planning on breaking the site into 3 units. A contract was signed for 1/3 of the site with Ocean State Job Lot, a discount retail store. They plan to open in May 2010. They are also in the process of signing a lease with another national retailer.

Another concern is the several vacant properties mostly owned by Merchants Motors. J. Duffy spoke to Merchants Motors and offered the Town's assistance to attract businesses. The number of vacant commercial properties is getting higher each month. The Town will have to come up with a plan. The group discussed possible plans to pursue.

J. Duffy announced that Taco Bell and Kentucky Fried Chicken will have a Grand Opening on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Oakhurst Dairy will sign a lease where Amoskeag Beverage was on Route 3A.

### **Chamber of Commerce**

M. Skelton presented the options available to the Town for establishing Chambers of Commerce. He stated that the Greater Manchester Chambers of Commerce is based in Manchester but they represent 13 communities in the greater Manchester area, including Hooksett. There are 25 active members from Hooksett. 40% of membership comes from outside Manchester. In order to eliminate duplication of functions, he suggested setting up a Hooksett Focus Business Committee, a committee that exists as a partnership between the Chamber, Town and Economic Development Committee. The specific role of the committee is to create, promote and execute Chamber focus programming for the Town. A starting point would be a quarterly networking gathering specifically for local businesses. A local business would host the gathering with food and drink for local businesses to come together, talk, network and socialize. Build the relationship and be able to address issues with the Town officials. There is a potential host for the initial gathering. From there, a committee would be charged with creating programs for businesses. The Manchester Chambers of Commerce would be able to assist the Town in getting the committee started and organizing any networking events. This is a part of services they offer for members of the chambers.

T. Barrett stated Cocci Computers has indicated they would be willing to host the first meeting in early January.

C. Ahlquist suggested using SNHU for a site. They are opening a new facility with a function room. SNHU is doing business with 50% of Hooksett businesses.

Richard Sullivan shared his background and personal accomplishments as a community leader and professional. He also expressed his interest in developing a Chamber of Commerce for the Town of Hooksett independent of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. He shared, however, that he would be open to ideas from the Manchester based organization and would work with Mike Skelton and Tom Barrett.

T. Barrett stated he does not see any conflict between what is being proposed by Manchester Chambers of Commerce and Mr. Sullivan's proposal. He added that an initial meet & greet hosted by Cocci Computers and sponsored by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce would be in order. Depending on the amount of interests it generates, a Hooksett Chambers of Commerce could be formed.

Chairman Sirak suggested for M. Skelton, R. Sullivan and T. Barrett to get together and organize the initial meeting in January, gather additional information and input from potential members. Based on that meeting, form the organizational structure best suited for the group.

J. Duffy stated she'd be reluctant to form a separate Chambers of Commerce when Manchester Chambers of Commerce's resources are available to the Town at no cost.

P. Loiselle stated he does not see any harm in forming a Hooksett Chambers of Commerce and letting that evolve and make its own decision as to whether it chooses to merge with Manchester Chambers of Commerce or be supported by Manchester Chambers of Commerce.

***T. Barrett moved to organize a January "Meet & Greet" with businesses to gather input on what type of Chambers of Commerce they would like to pursue in cooperation with Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Hooksett Chambers of Commerce Committee (Mr. Richard Sullivan's group). Motion seconded by F. Bishop. Motion carried.***

#### **Website**

The website is up and running. The Town is still in the process of modifying the website. C. Ahlquist suggested exploring a long-term partnership with SNHU on website work and maintenance. C. Granfield, C. Ahlquist, K. Moon and J. Munn were assigned to pursue and report at the next meeting.

#### **Restoration of Exit 6/7 on the 10-year Highway Plan**

C. Granfield attended a hearing to put Exit 6/7 back on the 10-year plan. She also sent letters to the DOT Commissioner, Governor and Executive Council asking for support. DOT will submit their recommendations the end of the week.

***The board approved sending a letter from Chairman Sirak supporting the restoration of Exit 6/7 on the 10-year Highway Plan.***

#### **Preservation of the Old Town Hall**

There was an offer to pursue the deed change with the Probate Court at no cost. The Council would like to know if the free legal assistance still stands. Chairman Sirak will consult a legal counsel on what they think the Probate Court would rule on this matter and will report back to the board.

#### **Town Facility Study**

M. Reed reported the group has conducted review of the facilities. They are in the process of putting together the final report. The committee will meet again in early December to finalize the report to be presented to the Council. This board will receive a copy of the final report.

#### **Revitalization Zones**

The application has been submitted. The Town anticipates it will be approved.

**Planning Board – Development of Guidebook**

The Planning Board sent out requests for information to different departments to begin the process. The process is going slow.

**Budget**

Administration is working on some economic development grants through the Community Development Department. C. Granfield was able to earmark \$2,500.00 for Economic Development from Administration Department budget.

C. Granfield was asked to update the board at the next meeting on exactly what was budgeted for Economic Development.

**CIP Membership Request**

The Planning Board is looking for volunteers to the CIP committee. Their meetings are scheduled for November 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.

A. Beauchemin distributed updates on current developments in progress.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn  
Administrative Assistant