

MINUTES

**HOOKSETT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HOOKSETT TOWN HALL
HOOKSETT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Wednesday, January 13, 2010**

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, Carol Granfield (Town Administrator).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of November 10, 2009 meeting was approved.

Ambassador's Program

F. Bishop gave an update on the Ambassador's Program.

The program has made great progress. Out of 62 businesses on the original contact list, 31 are completed, 14 are in the process, 2 declined to be interviewed, 3 are no longer in business and 12 have not been contacted.

There was a positive article in the Union Leader about the Ambassador's Program. Cocci Computers and Berry Hill were interviewed and had favorable comments. (See file.)

The goal for the next month is to complete the original list and develop the next wave of business contacts for 2010.

Discussion on how to handle issues with businesses not returning multiple phone calls.

C. Granfield stated the Town is in the process of putting together a business directory. The list will be grouped in categories. The list will be distributed when done and will be made available on line under the Economic Development section of the Town website.

Kiwanis' Heritage Trail Project

F. Bishop gave an update on Kiwanis' Heritage Trail Project. The trail was originally constructed by Manchester Sand & Gravel. The 1 ½ mile trail starts across from Greene's Marine and ends at the Head's Pond. Kiwanis is hoping to obtain a grant from DRED (Department of Resources & Economic Development) to upgrade and extend the trail.

*P. Loiselle moved to send a letter to DRED in support of the project. Motion seconded by T. Barrett. **Motion carried unanimously.***

Kiwanis 1st Annual Recognition Event

The first annual event will be held on April 10th at Southern New Hampshire University. Kiwanis will recognize various individuals and businesses that made a positive impact to the community. Awards will be given to the Business Leader of the Year, Small Business of the Year, Educator of the Year, Town Employee of the Year and Youth Volunteer of the Year.

Chamber of Commerce

T. Barrett informed the group the first meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, January 20th was postponed to Wednesday, February 17th at 5:30 pm. Cocci Computers will still host the event. Mike Skelton will send out invitations. C. Granfield mentioned that the Council meets on the same day. This date may have to be changed.

T. Barrett suggested establishing business networking as an alternative to “meet and greet” sessions. It was also suggested to add Chambers of Commerce’s potential projects under “Hooksett Ideas”.

Meeting with Pinard Waste

P. Loiselle met with the President of Pinard Waste. He (Pinard Waste President) attended a presentation by an energy company called EKAA. This company is planning to build over 700 waste energy facilities in the US over the next 20 years. They are looking to employ around 140 people per facility with an average salary of \$46,000 per employee. P. Loiselle suggested approaching this company to explore possible commercial opportunity. Consensus was to have the Town Administrator and Town Planner send a letter and provide some information.

Town Facility Study

C. Granfield stated the committee finished their work and presented a report to the Town Council (See file.) The Town Council will review the report and recommendations. Part of the report is for additional Fire Stations. A presentation will be made to the Council to have a study done for the Fire Locations and Staffing funded through impact fees. The Town was also approached by the City of Manchester to establish a regional fire station. The committee also made some recommendations with regards to the Town Hall. Files that are located in the second floor will be moved to the ground floor. Some departments will have to be moved. Also exploring the possibilities of leasing the unused portion of the building to generate some income for the Town. Due to a clause on the deed, which states that the building should be used for community and/or town use only, a warrant article is necessary to modify the deed.

Old Town Hall

Chairman Sirak informed the group he was able to obtain some information from Terry Knowles, Division of Charitable Trusts with regards to the old Town Hall (16 Main Street) deed. The Town could look at some options for alternative uses but whatever changes made will have to go through the process, i.e., look for heirs to the person who originally gave the property to the Town back in 1825 and the Town could go to Probate

Court. Ms. Knowles will be willing to assist the Town with the court process. The Town will have to make a decision what to do with the building. If the Town decides to sell the property, proceeds from the sale will have to be used to fund a community center or a Town Hall. The Town Hall Preservation Sub-Committee would review various options.

Town Website

C. Granfield informed the group that the company that developed the Town's website closed. The Town has hired a part-time IT personnel who comes in once a week. He will be working on the website and make some changes. The Economic Development section is up and running with added links. It will be further developed to include available business sites and a streamline process. The Town is also exploring possibilities of working with SNHU, specifically on Marketing. One suggestion is to have Marketing Major Interns to work with the Town.

Incubator Program

K. Moon gave an update on the program. They continue to develop a low cost model for the towns. The program is seeking grant opportunities to fund the project. Grant application should be completed by end of January. Turn around period is anywhere from 2 to 6 months.

Metro Annual Meeting

Chairman Sirak commented on one of the items discussed at the meeting. Developers have been critical of the planning process. A suggestion was made for SNHPC to design a template of a planning process and/or come up with best practices for planning boards to follow. Try to encourage communities to streamline the planning process.

C. Granfield stated this would be worth pursuing. It would be difficult to come up with a template for several communities, as each one is different. Coming up with best practices would be better.

C. Ahlquist moved to encourage the Planning Department to work with SNHPC to develop a "best practice" model for the planning and approval process. Motion seconded by C. Granfield. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Sirak handed copies of the Bedford Economic Development Committee's report to the Bedford Town Council. The Bedford EDC followed the same format as Hooksett's EDC. The report included percentages of residential, commercial, industrial, current use, exempt, etc. It was suggested to have the same data available for Hooksett.

The SNHPC did a regional analysis on Weaknesses, Opportunities, Stress in Strengths (WOSS). Hooksett was asked to do the same analysis for the town. C. Granfield asked everyone to review the report and send any input or comments to her by the end of the week. C. Granfield and J. Duffy will then review all data collected and put it together to be presented to SNHPC.

The following are suggested main goals for the committee for the year 2010:

1. Development of Chambers of Commerce
2. Continued focus on Exit 10 and Exit 11.
3. Further Development of the Old Walmart Site.
4. Appropriate Use of the Old Town Hall (16 Main Street).
5. Development of the Incubator Program.
6. Further Development and Maintenance of the Town Website.
7. Marketing Hooksett with assistance from SNHU.
8. Pursue Economic Development Opportunities.

Discussion on possibly holding a workshop on these items. Chairman Sirak will present an outline for strategic planning at the next meeting.

C. Granfield mentioned the Town received an approval from DRED on the designated areas for Community Reinvestment Tax Credit. The areas approved included the former Chinese food restaurant in Hooksett Road, Valley Industrial Park, Exit 11 (West River Road, Hackett Hill Road and Cate Road), Exit 10 (West River Road, Technology Drive and Kimball Drive) and Eastpoint Drive at Londonderry Turnpike.

Discussion on upcoming developments in Hooksett and steps needed to be taken to market available business sites.

Next meeting is February 10th.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant