

MINUTES

**HOOKSETT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HOOKSETT TOWN HALL
HOOKSETT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

Call to Order: Chairman W. Sirak called the meeting to order at 12:09 pm.

Present: Craig Ahlquist, Fred Bishop, Debra Campbell, Mark Sanborn, David Scarpetti and Chairman William Sirak

Excused: Tom Barrett, John Gryval, Andy Lynch, Nicholas Mercier, Mike Reed, Bill Gahara (Town Council Rep), Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner)

Staff: Carol Granfield (Town Administrator)

Also Present: Steve Heavener, (CRDC)

Approval of Minutes

The December 8, 2010 minutes was approved as amended.

C. Granfield brought up the subject of changing the charter to make non-resident business owners eligible for board membership. The PB along with other Town boards has no intentions of changing the charter.

F. Bishop moved for the HEDC to recommend a change in the charter to allow non-resident business owners to become members of Town boards. C. Ahlquist seconded.

Introduction and Orientation for New Members

Debra A. Campbell - Hooksett resident, General Electric Human Resource Manager, active member of Hooksett Kiwanis.

Mark Sanborn - New resident of Hooksett, graduated from UNH, worked for State Department of Agriculture and State Department of Transportation, owns a consulting firm for the last 2 years.

David Scarpetti – Hooksett resident, co-owner of Profile Self Storage and CR Realty, active member of Hooksett Kiwanis, wife is self-employed and volunteers for the Food Pantry and School.

Town Administrator's Report

C. Granfield informed the board of the following:

1. The Town continues to seek business and development for Exit 11. In discussion with State and private property owners. Shaw's Plaza is taking off with new

businesses in the area. The addition of Veano's Restaurant and Tractor Supply has rejuvenated the area.

2. The Planning Board has one zoning amendment proposal to be added to the warrant articles.
3. The Town Council adopted its budget and various Warrant Articles. The Budget Committee is now reviewing the budget. Departments have scaled back on major expenses and reduced capital items. \$1,500 has been allocated for Economic Development for the next fiscal year.
4. The Charter Review Committee was charged by the Town Council to review the Charter and recommend amendments. The public hearing is scheduled for tonight at 6:30 pm. One of the major recommended changes is the reduction in number of members of the Town Council, Planning Board, Budget Committee and Conservation Commission. Another major recommended amendment is to change the Town Election from May to March to be held at same time as School District Election.
5. The Town received grant funds for over \$2,000 to extend sidewalks from Main Street to College Park Drive.
6. C. Granfield and Chair Sirak met with NHDOT and the State Liquor Commission. The State decided to keep the liquor stores where they are now. Proposals would be presented to double the size of the current Liquor Stores, add a gas facility and a restaurant.
7. PSNH selected a Hooksett site (behind the Safety Center) for expansion. PSNH had purchased a piece of property adjacent to the site. The Town was instrumental in facilitating the sale.

Economic Development Director

Chair Sirak commented on Town of Bedford's hiring of Economic Development Director. HEDC is primarily an all-volunteer board that works behind the scenes in mainly, an advisory capacity. The board has two Town staff (Town Administrator and Town Planner), who assist the board.

Discussion on possibly hiring an Economic Development Director for Hooksett. General consensus among board members was a contracted Economic Development Director would be a good idea but a tough sell.

M. Sanborn stated with all the issues the Town currently has, this is not a good time to request for funds to hire a staff.

C. Ahlquist commented on how much have been done with an all-volunteer board and added a paid staff would be able to accomplish a lot more.

S. Heavener stated the subject of Economic Development is a real dilemma in NH because of the property tax structure. It's a real challenge to see a return in investment. The State EDC does not invest a lot of funds in improvement. Not a lot of true recruitment in Economic Development. To have an Economic Development Director is mainly, to have a single point of contact.

C. Ahlquist suggested referring to the position as Tax Stabilization staff not Economic Development Director.

C. Granfield stated currently, she is the acting Economic Development Director. The Town is looking to lease part of the Town Hall. The current lessee, Scholar's Academy is closing because of the economy. The Town has also received inquiries regarding possibly renting the gym facilities, which has a full kitchen.

B. Sirak suggested holding an economic summit in the spring.

Discussion on possibly incorporating Economic Development functions into Town Administrator's and/or Town Planner's positions.

Chair Sirak moved to appoint the Town Administrator as the single point of contact for Economic Development. C. Ahlquist seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Ahlquist stated the motion does not, in any way imply that the Town Planner has not done a good job but simply to appoint a single point of contact for the Town.

C. Granfield suggested holding the economic summit at the Town Hall gym in May. Committee members were assigned to plan the event.

Discussion on fulfilling businesses needs through local businesses.

Capital Regional Development Council (CDRC) Report

S. Heavener stated CRDC is primarily a lender, an enhancement lender, financing businesses. They finance gap between what a business owner can finance and what they borrow. CDRC does not compete with private developers. They do not deal with businesses, they deal with the banks. They are not a traditional bank. They would like to help business in Hooksett grow and inform businesses that CRDC is an available resource. Hooksett is a great location for businesses.

Ambassadors Program Update

F. Bishop presented an update. The main purpose of the program is to retain existing businesses and attract new ones. They completed about 30 visits to date. A template for discussion is available for members. It is a tool to receive feedback from local businesses. There are approximately 600-700 businesses in Town. F. Bishop presented a list to the board and asked members to pick out some of the highlighted businesses. He asked each member to do at least one every 6 months and added that members have to be persistent in trying to get a meeting date. The program has been helpful in resolving issues between businesses and Town departments. General rule is praise in public and criticize in private.

Nominating Report

Steve Korzyniowski submitted his resignation from the board. The board accepted his resignation.

The board would welcome representation from the School District.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant