

## MINUTES

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

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

**Present:** Tom Barrett, Debra Campbell, Bill Gahara, John Gryval, Nicholas Mercier, Mike Reed, David Scarpetti and Chairman William Sirak

**Excused:** Fred Bishop, Mark Sanborn, Andrew Lynch, and Craig Ahlquist

**Staff:** Carol Granfield (Town Administrator), Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner)

**Also Present:** Jack Munn (SNHPC)

### **Approval of Minutes**

*The February 9, 2011 minutes were approved.*

### **Town Administrator's Report**

C. Granfield informed the board of the following:

1. Despite of the economy, there are currently a lot of activities in Town. Working on several projects with businesses in different phases. McDonald's renovation plan was approved, as well as Heritage Credit Union.
2. Still working on a development at Exit 11 but nothing new to report.
3. The Town Hall is looking to lease the space vacated by Scholar's Academy. There is limited number of parking spaces assigned in front of the building.
4. The Town Hall is also looking to lease the kitchen facilities.

### **K-Mart Plaza**

Discussion on continuing problems with flooding.

J. Duffy stated DOT agreed to look into an alternative plan for the drainage design and reviewing to see if it is feasible.

C. Granfield added the plans were provided to the Sewer Department. There is meeting scheduled to discuss the plan and the costs associated with it.

### **Southern New Hampshire Regional Plan Review**

J. Munn: SNHPC has done a lot for the Town of Hooksett over the last couple of years not only in Transportation but in helping the Town's efforts in economic development, particularly generating the business list and the data base of all businesses and locations. We also worked on Atlas of zones and helped organized a focus group meeting at Merchants Auto. Recently updated the Economic Development Plan, which is a part of the Town's Master Plan. This should be reviewed by this board with a recommendation to the Planning Board.

Chair Sirak shared that Jack Munn presented the following significant facts about Hooksett.

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest tax rate after Bedford.
2. Job growth has increased despite current recession.
3. Ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in Merrimack and Hillsborough County in terms of median family income.
4. Fast becoming a major center of commerce for the region.
5. Just below Manchester in terms of level of commerce and land value.

Some Key Major Economic Development Plans

1. Continue to support major mixed use development within the community.
2. Protect large well-located parcels for continued Master Plan development.
3. Establish and promote a village center.
4. Develop greater river access.
5. Strategic placement of sewer.
6. Employ debt financing and use of TIFS for infrastructure.
7. Establish appropriate balance of retail mixed use at major intersections.
8. Establish a Route 3 and Route 3A opportunity corridor fund.

Currently working with Central New Hampshire Planning Commission and the City of Manchester on forming a larger regional economic district.

J. Munn presented the results of New Hampshire Cost of Community Services Study. Hooksett spent \$1.16 for every \$1 revenue on residential properties. \$0.43 was spent for every \$1 revenue on commercial and \$0.55 was spent for every \$1 revenue on open space.

Chair Sirak added SNHPC has been an active partner of the Town of Hooksett and Economic Development Committee. The Town is also looking into getting business locations pre-certified with the Planning Board to help businesses avoid a lengthy approval process. This is an opportunity for the Town to be a test community. The Town is currently focused on the expense side of economic growth. It will have to focus on the income side and how to broaden the tax base.

**Draft Access Management Study Report Route 3A**

J. Duffy presented the study report.

Route 3A has become a dangerous roadway over the past several years and has gotten worst in recent years. The study addresses this problem and how to avoid some of the traffic issues. The study covers the entire Route 3A corridor from Manchester to Bow. Hooksett's portion of the study cost \$10,000, paid for through CTAP funding. The report outlines suggestions as to where a driveway access points could be closed off and shared access points could be developed. This does not apply to existing driveways. This would take into effect as the properties develop. The report was submitted to the Planning Board about a month ago. It was reviewed at two separate Planning Board meetings. Currently in the process of reviewing the draft Memorandum of Understanding with the DOT. Once the Planning Board adopts the plan and the Memorandum of Understanding is signed, whenever someone comes in for a driveway permit, this would be taken into consideration.

Chair Sirak stated the Town needs to invest in some infrastructure to further develop its tax base. This will probably justify trying to get a budget item for the future. If the Town does not spend the money to do these research and studies, the Town will be in a reactive situation.

B. Gahara added he agreed with the Chair. The Town will have to think about long term planning. The biggest issue is how to educate people and have them understand that the Town needs to invest in economic development. The Town could also explore other ways of funding, i.e., grants.

#### **Site Selection Issues**

The Town is working on having selected areas pre-certified for developers so they wouldn't have to go through the approval process with the Planning Board.

J. Duffy informed the board of issues with some planners. A lot of them have some concerns on how this would actually work. David Preece will try to adjust what he had proposed.

Chairman Sirak stated SNHPC are still working on the plan. One of the issues that came up was if a developer presents a plan with a pre-certified location, the Planning Board will approve it. One question is the length of the approval period. Some developers felt 3 years is too short and asked for at least 5 years. The issue is that Planning Board members change every year. Is one Planning Board going to agree with another Planning Board's decision? Everyone agrees having pre-certified locations is attractive to all developers.

J. Gryval added pre-approval sometime works and sometimes it doesn't. This will need a lot of discussion.

J. Duffy stated new developments for Exit 10/11 mostly hinges on infrastructure, sewer in particular. She suggested meeting with the Sewer Commission.

C. Granfield had discussions with Sewer Commission. They started preliminary work at Exit 11 when there were interests. They haven't added funds on the budget since nothing is on the horizon. The area needs sewer connection regardless of what is going to be developed. There hasn't been additional discussion at Exit 10. On the State's Service Area, they are ready to issue the RFP. They will come before the Planning Board and Zoning Board for informational purposes only. They will be allowed flexibility.

**Work Force Housing Report**

J. Duffy presented the work force housing report.

Last year, an application for work force housing was presented to the Planning Board but was denied for reason other than work force housing. The applicant took the Planning Board to court but lost. The applicant decided to do a conventional town houses rather than work force housing. As part of preparation for the court case, the Town Attorney contracted with Central Regional Planning to conduct a study on whether or not the Town of Hooksett has its fair share of work force housing. It was determined that the Town had enough work force housing based on last year's figures. This report has to be updated yearly. NH Housing comes up with a report every year.

**Transportation Service for the Elderly**

J. Duffy reported they met with the Manchester Transit Authority to discuss the possibility of bringing in a bus service for seniors to go shopping at various locations, i.e., Walmart, Shaw's, etc. The Hooksett-ites are very receptive to the proposed program. The cost is \$85 for one bus run. There will be no cost to the Town. The stores will pay for the cost. They also received inquiries about bus service to go to doctors' appointments. The program will be pursued and have something running by summer time.

**Economic Development Summit Meeting Update**

M. Sanborn suggested having a well-known politician as key note speaker to draw a crowd. He suggested holding the event during Congress recess on September 26-30.

**Ambassadors' Program**

J. Duffy suggested holding a Business Expo where businesses can set up a table and residents can come in and see what businesses are available in Town. Board consensus was to hold a regional event rather than a Town event.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2011.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn

Administrative Assistant