

**Hooksett Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 25, 2014
4:00 PM**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm.

Present: Muamer Durakovic, Ivan Gult, Matt Mercier, David Scarpetti, Donald Winterton, Carolyn Cronin (Assistant Town Planner) and Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner).

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

October 21, 2014 Meeting – The minutes were approved as presented.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

M. Durakovic was elected as Chair and D. Scarpetti was elected as Vice-Chair.

Old Business

Ideas for EDC Projects

At the last meeting, C. Cronin presented some ideas for EDC projects (see attached memo dated 10/21/2014).

M. Mercier volunteered to work on the “Case Studies”. D. Winterton volunteered to Chair the sub-committee for “Case Studies”. Staff will provide a list of businesses with questionnaires. I. Gult volunteered to help with questionnaires.

D. Winterton moved to direct staff to create a list of (5) large businesses and (5) small businesses with a set of questionnaires. Motion seconded by D. Scarpetti. Motion carried unanimously.

Community Profile Committee

Marc Miville, Community Profile Committee Chair presented an update. The forum consisted of 11 components. From there (6) smaller groups were created, Economic Development being one of them. One of the goals of the group is to make EDC more autonomous. The group is meeting again on December 9, 2014.

M Miville also suggested for EDC to work on coming up with a Town map with local businesses, i.e., hotels, restaurant, etc. The staff will look into putting this together.

The group discussed the possibilities of creating a position for Economic Development Director. J. Duffy stated the Community Profile Committee could explore this option.

Town Planner's Update – Joanne Duffy

UNH Business Retention and Expansion Program

The Town Council approved the implementation of the program. The cost of the program is \$1,500.

Economic Development Academy Training

The Town Planner and the Assistant Town Planner completed the training at the Economic Development Academy. C. Cronin presented an Economic Development Plan for the board to consider (See attached "Economic Development Plan"). This will be discussed at a future meeting and will be presented to the Town Council.

New Business

Update to Town Council

The Town Council requires for all committees to present an update/report once a year. D. Winterton suggested for the Chair and the Town Planner to come in and present an update to the Town Council. J. Duffy will coordinate with Administration on a date to attend a Town Council meeting.

EDC Membership

Currently, EDC does not have a set of "Rules and Procedures" and members do not have terms. The Town Council appoints members to the board. It was determined that EDC can set "Rules and Procedures" for the board and its members. J. Duffy suggested updating the committee's "Goals and Objectives".

M. Mercier moved to direct D. Winterton to come up with a draft of the committee's Rules and Procedures. Motion seconded by D. Winterton. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff will send over other committees' "Rules and Procedures" to serve as a guide.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 4 pm.

EDC members would like to wish everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant

Economic Development Committee

From: Carolyn Cronin, Assistant Planner

Date: 10/21/2014

1. *Meeting Date/Time*

According to Evelyn's emails and the WhenIsGood.Net survey, the majority of you chose Tuesdays at 4pm, which work for all except Darryl, who can't get out of work in time.

2. *Ideas for EDC Projects*

Case Studies

Working off of Don's suggestion to present case studies on Hooksett success stories (Huttig/GE, Lowe's to Bass Pro conversion, Rest Area partnership, Walmart Sewer Bill, etc.), the EDC members could interview the people involved with the projects and then produce short case studies to publish in a booklet and post to the website. Questions to include are: How they found the site, what attracted them to their location, their experience with the development process in Hooksett, etc.

Sites Database

Create a webpage of available sites for potential businesses and developers. EDC members can approach property owners (both buildings and undeveloped sites) about sharing their available properties for listing in a central database. EDC can ask owners/landlords to fill out a standard form and we can add our Town data to it and post. Information can include: acreage/square footage, zoning, utilities and infrastructure, current approvals (site plans, variances), GIS maps (location, wetlands, etc.) and contact info. Jo Ann says something similar to this was started in the past and can serve as a jumping off point for us.

2004/2013 Master Plan Task List

Review the goals of the 2004 and 2013 Economic Development Plans and take stock of where you are at and what tasks are still relevant and can be accomplished. (See below)

MASTER PLAN GOALS

2004 & 2013 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS COMBINED

- Continue to implement the Ambassadors Program
- Designate and promote economic revitalization tax credit zones throughout community
- Address needs of existing businesses and proactively seek out new commercial opportunities
- Maintain and improve the Town's Economic Development website
- Adopt a community supported plan for development at Exits 10 and 11
- Implement TIF district to fund water and sewer at Exit 10 and 11
- Town signage and beautification projects at gateway entrances.
- Brownfield's Revitalization Program.

2004 MASTER PLAN AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2006 STUDY

2004 Master Plan:

- "Consider 6 economic development areas: Exit 10, Exit 11, Village, Route 3 North, Route 3 South, Route 28 Bypass."

Audit Recommendation:

- "Characterize each area in terms of size, infrastructure, zoning, etc. like in Village Design Charrette. Make future zoning for these areas and Economic Development objectives compatible."

Carolyn Cronin

Assistant Planner, Town of Hooksett, NH

Economic Development Academy Homework Assignment #3: The Final Plan

Subject: Hooksett Economic Development Committee (HEDC)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GOALS:

- Identify actions the HEDC can take which will nurture the local business community.
- Identify strategies both municipal staff and volunteers can deploy to encourage appropriate economic development for Hooksett.

CHALLENGES:

- Significant member turnover, many key members leaving, Chair stepping down
- Loss of a sense of purpose and direction
- Limited resources and meeting time

DATA:

Population:

Hooksett is older and getting even older, has more Baby Boomers, has faster population growth, is whiter, slightly wealthier, and slightly more educated than the US on average. The overwhelming majority are English speaking only.

- 12.6% population increase from 2000 to 2012
- 21.4% increase in median age from 2000 to 2012. Jump in median age from 37.8 to 45.9

Age Distribution (percent of Hooksett Population) from 2000-2012

AGE	2000	DIFFERENCE	2012	
Under 18	25.1%	-9.3%	15.8%	School age
18-34	9.5%	+12%	21.5%	
35-44	20.2%	-9.5%	10.7%	
45-64	25.5%	+6.7%	32.2%	

65 and older	9.7%	+10%	19.7%	Retirees
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- 93.3% white, 5.2% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 1% black, and 0.5% other
- 93.9% High School graduates, 34.7% Bachelor or higher, 9.8% Associates, 6.1% no High School degree
- 90.6% speak only English, 6.5% speak other Indo-European languages, 2.2% speak Spanish or Spanish Creole, 1.8% speak English less than very well, 0.8% speak Asian or Pacific Islander
- The median household income is \$69,570

Household Income

PERCENT OF POPULATION	INCOME RANGE (\$)
23.4%	50,000 – 74,999
20%	75,000 – 99,999
19.6%	100,000 – 149,999
11.8%	35,000 – 49,999
8.8%	23,000 – 34,999
5.5%	10,000 – 14,999
5.3%	15,000 – 24,999
3.7%	150,000 – 199,999
1.6%	less than 10,000
0.2%	200,000 or more

Employment & Housing:

Most people work in white collar or service jobs, a majority of the community are employed full-time year round and work within thirty minutes of home. Most income is generated from labor earnings, followed by retirement and Social Security, with the rest made up of various forms of public assistance. 98.7% of the housing stock is occupied and that which is not, is for sale. Most homes were built in the 1980's or early 2000's.

Employment by Occupation

PERCENT OF POPULATION	OCCUPATION
37.5%	Management, professional & related
26.5%	Sales & office
16.5%	Service
10.7%	Construction, extraction, maintenance & repair
8.9%	Production, transportation & material moving

Employment by Industry

PERCENT OF POPULATION	INDUSTRY
19.5%	Education, health care, social assistance

13%	Retail trade
12.9%	Public administration
11.7%	Manufacturing
9.1%	Finance, insurance, real estate
7.7%	Professional, science, management, administration, waste management
7.2%	Other services
5.9%	Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, food
4.2%	Wholesale trade
3.8%	Construction
3.8%	Transportation, warehousing, utilities
1.2%	Information

- 64.9% employed full-time
- 59% work within thirty minutes of home
- 5.6% of individuals and 1.7% of families live below the poverty line
- 80% generate their main income from labor earnings
- 55% generate their main income through Social Security and retirement sources

Earning Sources

PERCENT OF POPULATION	EARNING SOURCE
79.3%	Labor earnings
35.1%	Social Security
22.3%	Retirement income
5.8%	Food stamp/SNAP
5.6%	Cash public assistance
1.2%	Supplemental security income

Housing Stock by Year Built

PERCENT OF HOUSING STOCK	YEAR BUILT
28.9%	1980 – 1989
20.7%	2000 – 2004
16.6%	1959 or earlier
14.5%	1960 – 1969
9.7%	1970 – 1979
7.8%	1990 – 1999
1.8%	2005 or later

Housing Affordability

Owners	41.4%	Monthly cost > 30% household income
Owners	11.2%	Monthly cost < 30% household income
Renters	39.6%	Monthly cost > 30% household income

Renters	2.9%	Monthly cost < 30% household income
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Data Analysis: As the data shows, Hooksett is fairly average when compared to the United States and the rest of New Hampshire. Additionally, Hooksett lacks a downtown area and lacks a business niche or economic identity. Because of these factors, Hooksett must try harder than other communities to come up with unique economic development strategies. However, there are many benefits to Hooksett including access to many major State and Interstate roads, a university, a diverse business community, and is situated conveniently within an hour of Concord, Manchester, Boston and the Seacoast. In a town that, by statistical standards, appears to be devastatingly average, Hooksett needs to work hard to advertise its unique advantages for economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Retention

- Build a relationship with the existing business community
- Focus on meeting the needs of the existing business community, what they will need to remain in business and/or expand

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- ***Create an outreach plan for the existing business community*** and establish relationships that will allow you to gain their trust. The outreach plan will include visits to businesses both large and small to show your appreciation for having them locate in Hooksett and help build trust so they will come to you with future issues. This will encourage the businesses to provide feedback on economic development issues related to them. Another aspect of the outreach plan will be to create the opportunity for networking among existing business and with the Chamber of Commerce. This will allow us to learn about their supply chains and see if we can connect people who may be able to use each other's services and/or products, as well as share information and resources. The most significant outcome of this will be working with businesses one-on-one to meet their current and future needs.

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Identify local innovators and entrepreneurs
- Create a climate in which they can share ideas and network

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Create a “think tank” concept for networking and listening to entrepreneurs’ needs. We will need to identify who those people are in the community and actively seek them out. Reaching out to local businesses, organizations (Chamber of Commerce and other business-minded groups) and institutions (Southern NH University, etc.), in a meaningful way, will help attract these significant members of the community. Having monthly or quarterly meetings with them will show them that the Town is invested helping them achieve their goals. Preferably these meeting will not be held at Town Hall, but in a more informal setting (business or restaurant), because this population is not likely to seek out public meetings. This think tank concept will allow an open forum for entrepreneurs and innovators to share their thoughts, needs and suggestions. It will also allow the Town to share resources that are available to them and provide information on how to start a business in Town. The goal is to nurture local entrepreneurs and keep them local.

Small Business

- Focus on the needs of small businesses
- Learn what they will need to help them grow and provide those resources

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Amend Home Occupation zoning regulations to encourage home occupations and serve their needs. 52% of all small businesses are home based. Another aspect of this would be to keep an inventory of home occupations and keep tabs on them to see what other regulatory hurdles can be amended to help them.

Become a point place for providing resources to small business owners or start-ups. The Community Development Department will be the one-stop shop for people who want to start a business in Town. We will provide the information they need on Town regulations and processes. Another aspect of this includes providing information from outside sources that will help them, for example the Hannah Grimes Center, NHSBDC, DRED and Buzgate.

Business-Friendly Town Offices

- Amend regulations and guiding documents in a way that encourages economic development
- Create a business-friendly atmosphere in Town offices

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Codify economic development in the Master Plan and in other documents and regulations (Zoning Ordinance, Development Regulations, etc.) The Master Plan could include a statement that the Town supports strategies that encourage small business and unique economic development strategies. As previously mentioned, amend Home Occupation regulations and other zoning regulations in a way that nurtures businesses and is not too restrictive to their needs. This will give some regulatory teeth to our initiatives and will establish a community consensus on economic development.

Build relationships with developers, site consultants, etc. who interact with the Community Development office by being helpful, friendly, efficient and supportive. Having a good rapport with these people will keep Hooksett on their radar for future projects.

Update the Town website and social media to provide resources and information pertaining to economic development

Encourage press releases on economic successes in Town and be sure to give all involved parties the credit they deserve

HOW WILL THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES?

At the top of this report I outlined the challenges facing the HEDC. To reiterate they are:

- Significant member turnover, many key members leaving, Chair stepping down
- Loss of a sense of purpose and direction
- Limited resources and meeting time

By implanting this Economic Development Plan, it will create action plans that the HEDC can invest in (or not) and this will help provide a ***sense of direction***. Assigning HEDC members individual tasks related to the implementation of the recommendations will help give them ***purpose*** and let them know that their volunteer service is not only important, but is vital to the Town. The intent is that these projects will produce outcomes and once those outcomes are

generated, this will ignite their passion and inspire them to **stay on board** the HEDC and coax out a leader to become the **Chair**. In addition, by working one-on-one with the business community, the intent is that it will encourage businesspeople and entrepreneurs to join the HEDC and serve as a source of **recruitment**. Another benefit to these recommendations is that most of the real groundwork is done outside of the monthly meeting time, and is **of little or no cost to the Town**. Therefore, the **monthly meetings** will serve more as debriefing sessions where HEDC members talk about their progress and identify what needs to happen next.

TIMELINE:

Some of the recommended actions will have a specific timeline and some will be ongoing projects. The business retention and innovator/entrepreneur recommendations will be an ongoing effort by the HEDC. It will take a few meetings (few months) to organize and create a deployment plan, but from there, the results will be a continual process.

November HEDC meeting (11-25-14): Propose Economic Development Plan to HEDC and let HEDC deliberate on what, if any, recommendations they would like to adopt.

December HEDC meeting (12-23-14): More discussion of plan and vote on which actions they will choose to implement.

January HEDC meeting (1-27-15): Delegate tasks to members. Starting a new year will be the perfect time to get HEDC members motivated to begin implementing the outreach plan and designing a “think tank” concept.

February HEDC meeting (2-24-15): First debriefing of actions taken. (Who visited what business, what the outcome was, any challenges, how to move forward from there).

The small business and Town Office recommendations, which have to do with regulatory changes, will have to abide by the timeline of the Master Plan (every ten years or so), Zoning Ordinance (every year) and Development Regulations (as needed).

Master Plan 2015 (year-long): Incorporate new Economic Development strategies and recommendations into the Master Plan process, which will be undertaken in 2015. Make sure the Master Plan Steering Committee and public input support the outlined recommendations to create a community consensus on economic development.

May 2015: Create a sub-committee of the HEDC and include land use board members, guided by Town staff, to review Zoning regulations including Home Occupation regulations. (In the

absence of a full-time Economic Development staff person, it is crucial that this be a collaborative effort.) In May, the current zoning amendments will be voted on and it will be a good time to see what else needs to be looked at by the 2016 zoning amendment deadlines. As the zoning deadlines for 2015 are coming up in a couple months, with the holidays in between, starting an initiative now would be too rushed and therefore would not allow for the time necessary to review and deliberate on what aspects of the zoning need to be amended.

Effective immediately: Implement recommendations related to Town office staff and, more importantly, how the Town positions itself for economic development (via web, social media, in person interface) as soon as possible. A staff meeting to inform everyone and get all employees on the same page will be necessary to implement these recommendations. The focus should be on relationship building (customer service), public relations (press releases) and efficiency (making sure everyone knows who the point people are and where certain information is available.)

EVALUATION:

To evaluate the results of this plan, there are a few methods of benchmarking.

Annual surveys to Town businesses to see how the HEDC and Town staff is doing in terms of providing resources to businesses, being available, and getting the business community engaged.

Home Occupation inventory, which will be created upon the review of the Home Occupation regulations, will help show if the regulatory changes have been helpful, for example has the number of home occupations increased? Have existing home occupations expanded?

Impact of regulatory changes can be measured through qualitative and quantitative means. Qualitative would be talking with entrepreneurs and the business community, which the HEDC will have identified, to see if the changes have made any impact (positive or negative) on their business operations and plans. Qualitative measures would include analyzing how many new businesses have come to Town or how many businesses have expanded. This data would be fairly easy to find through Planning Board applications and building permits.

Overall, any changes having to do with economic development will take a long time to see the results and measure them. Independent factors such as the economy (is it up or down?), the weather (will a snowy winter impact ability to build?) and evolving State and Federal regulations (taxes, health insurance, etc.) all influence the local economy. What may be the most influential change is the Town's image. If people can see the efforts the Town is putting

into encouraging economic development, then the public image gained by the Town (that of being business-friendly) may have the most significant impact.

