

Jaffrey Economic Development Council
Draft Minutes 3/16/16
9:00 am Town Office

Present: Bill Schofield, Chair, Cathy Furze, Don MacIsaac, Sam Hackler, Peter Davis, Ed Merrell,

Staff: Jo Anne Carr

1. Update on Broadband

The recent survey conducted for Peterborough and neighboring communities revealed a few interesting findings. While the preponderance of respondents were from Peterborough, the data may indicate an alignment with broadband users in Jaffrey.

About half of the respondents work in town (Peterborough). Of the total 80% used either Fairpoint or Comcast with a very small percent using one of the smaller providers such as WiValley. Interestingly 12% didn't know who their provider was. Levels of dissatisfaction were very high for Fairpoint (65.5%) and less so for Comcast (29%). "In Peterborough, Fairpoint business customers pay far less for business service than Comcast customers – half pay less than \$50 per month¹". Of note is that the majority of respondents indicated they would not expand in their current location (57.5%) Across the communities having access to higher speed internet would enable their business to operate more profitably/efficiently (79.1%).

The full report can be found here: http://www.townofpeterborough.com/index.asp?SEC=5AD98634-D0A6-4C89-9652-EA52A4337E9B&DE=753AD0AD-02B9-4715-ACEA-D8DCF860BFEF&Type=B_BASIC

Jo Anne summarized the proposed legislation which would have enabled municipalities to bond for broadband projects, HB 389 proposes to allow local governments to bond for broadband infrastructure but does not allow municipalities to provide retail services. So communities would be able to build open access networks but not be allowed to offer services directly to subscribers. The premise is that communities would develop partnerships with providers to secure access to high speed broadband to all consumers. This bill treats broadband as any other utility provided by a community. Currently only those communities with absolutely no service providers can bond for infrastructure improvements. (Since the meeting this bill failed in the House).

Discussion included working with Peterborough and Rindge in particular to keep Jaffrey informed of any forward movement in bringing better internet services to the region.

2. DT TIFD Project Update

Jo Anne reviewed what projects are under way: survey for sidewalk maintenance, monument repair and renovation, and the route 202/124 transportation project is slowly moving through the approval process. Renee has gotten estimates for completing the press box at community field, funds will come from the TIFD.

3. DT Business Support

Discussion on providing business support ensued. Ideas floated for follow-up included reaching out to local investors to assist with business recruitment, and connecting with SWRPC and their Economic Development outreach activities. At the next meeting the EDC should evaluate its priorities and focus efforts.

4. Meeting schedule

Is back at the 4th Wednesday at 9 am.

¹ Accelara Publishing Research. Peterborough Internet Connectivity Study, November 13, 2015

5. Status reports/Other

Don gave a short survey to the EDC members present. The summary will be presented in April.

6. Adjourn

NEXT MEETING: April 27, 2016