

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 31, 1993

Page 1

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem; Members Joan Lovering, Barbara Jackson, Bob Grott, Mike Toomey, Andy Milligan, Paul Kimball, Bob Garland, Sharon Severy, Tim Sullivan; Amanda Simpson, ex officio.

ABSENT: Tony Triolo, Bruce Dreisbach, Bill Wiebe

Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order shortly after 7:30 a.m. in the First NH Bank Conference Room and introduced Gretchen Stewart, who has replaced Verne Crosier as director of the Business Visitation Program. She had come to discuss the results of our survey.

She began by saying that Wolfeboro had a higher than average response rate, and apologized for the slow response from DRED, which was caused by the personnel change, and her subsequent illness. She reported that 110 communities in the State had participated in the Business Visitation Program, and 30 of them are in the report stage, like Wolfeboro. She pointed out two issues that stood out on the survey, and the discussion centered around them:

Hospital and health care concerns - This ranked high in Ossipee too. Was it high costs, or the perception that the hospital is more concerned with bricks and mortar than with people? Shirley Ganem said she had an appointment to talk with Administrator Les MacLeod about Huggins Hospital's need for a good public relations program.

Average age of Wolfeboro businesses - Stewart noticed that this was about 22 years, and she wondered if the owners of a lot of these small companies were reaching retirement age, and the businesses were soon to be taken over by younger people. Committee members countered that Wolfeboro businesses often change ownership, or evolve into different kind of business, so this was nothing to be concerned about.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN - Stewart's suggestions

- * A speaker from the International Trade Center at Pease, who would talk with local businesses interested in marketing products overseas. Would this be appropriate? Local businesses mentioned that might find this helpful were Link Metals, NPR Audio, Cornish Hill Pottery, Hampshire Pewter, Wolfeboro Products. She mentioned a food trade show presently going on with delegations from Japan, France etc. looking for food specialty products.
- * A speaker from the Tourist Office (part of DRED) about different ways of selling the community as a tourist place.
- * Business Focus Group - thank you gathering for volunteers and the businesses who participated, to share results of the survey
- * Talk with school about problems finding qualified work force. 40% of the businesses reported problems recruiting employees with basic

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
March 31, 1993

Page 2

skills. There was discussion about the business community working out some co-op or internship program with high school students. Find out what specific skills businesses need. This lack of basic skills is a problem all over the state, and indeed all over the country.

* Business Focus Group on Taxes - business profits tax, workman's compensation, etc. Experts on all these issues are available to help local businesses with these subjects.

* Export Assistance Workshop (as mentioned above)

* Information on government procurement--information on available government contracts can be accessed through the DRED office. Medical, environmental contracts are possible.

* Technical colleges and Industrial Research Center at UNH will help companies with research and development work.

The comment was made that these suggestions would provide programs for the Chamber of Commerce seminars for the next several years.

REPORT TO VISITORS AND PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES - this will be the first program. Stewart will come to speak, and an evening meeting, possibly in April will be planned.

There was some discussion of the survey in general, and the suggestion was made that Wolfeboro really needed some different questions specifically designed for service-oriented businesses, since 90% of our businesses are service based.

REPORT OF ROUTE 28 COMMITTEE

The committee was represented by Barbara Jackson, its chairman; Tim Sullivan, Paul Kimball, and Steve Hale. They had passed out a six-page summary of their basic concept, and wanted to be sure that the EDC and the Planning Board were in general agreement with their planning before they went ahead and hired a consultant. In response to questioning, they explained that the committee's goals and objectives for Route 28 development were two-fold:

1. To protect Wolfeboro's "Rural Gateway" by buffering, landscaping, etc.
2. To encourage location of auto-based businesses that don't fit in the Central Business District

A main concern was that development on 28 not devastate Downtown Wolfeboro, but provide additional retail area for healthy competition.

The Planner suggested that when the Route 28 Committee prepared draft

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 31, 1993

Page 3

documents like this, the first page should start with a declaration of their objectives, and also include a reduced map of the area. The sheets handed out today were just a basic listing of uses, etc., but didn't really explain what the purpose of the planning was.

The question of permitting fuel storage was brought up. This is a NIMBY, and that problem needs to be addressed. This could be encouraged in Zone 2.

There was discussion about the businesses presently located on #28 which would not conform to these standards, and it was pointed that proper landscaping and buffering would make most of them conforming.

- * Simpson questioned the large area under consideration--about 600 acres. That would more than double the commercial acreage in Wolfeboro. She is concerned that opening all that up in one year will not provide healthy competition for downtown. It should be phased in gradually, as needed.

How much do we want Wolfeboro to grow? Do we want to double our population in the next 10 or 20 years? Increase our tax base? How much and when? Barbara Jackson quoted a report that the labor-shed for blue-collar workers was 29 miles, and for white-collar workers was even farther, so they didn't have to live in town.

Tim Sullivan brought the discussion back to Route 28 with the observation that people wanted something to be done with Route 28, and also that "Nothing ever happens." The Route 28 committee was in existence to make something happen.

Mike Toomey moved that the EDC accept the concept which the Route 28 Committee had presented, and Andy Milligan seconded his motion. Sharon Severy amended Toomey's motion to add that the Committee's written objectives and vision, as presented last fall, should be attached to this report. Toomey and Milligan withdrew the first motion, Mike seconded Sharon's motion, and it carried.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This was to have been the next report, but it was now after 9 a.m. and most of the Committee had left. This will start the next meeting, which will be in two weeks, on April 14.

Shirley Ganem reported that Bob Murphy had resigned due to expansion of his personal business, and she read his letter of resignation.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Arctander
Secretary

