

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
January 26, 1994

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PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem; Barbara Jackson, Bill Wiebe, Andy Milligan

ABSENT: Tony Triolo, Paul Kimball, Bob Grott, Bob Garland, Tim Sullivan

Chairman Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:39 in the Planning Office Conference Room.

First discussion was of the composition of the group, and the need to find some new active members. A good marketing person was especially needed. S. Ganem reported that the Planning Board was really going to move ahead on the Master Plan, and an essential part of that was a statement of vision and purpose, like the one EDC had drafted and the Selectmen adopted. There needed to be a newspaper story about that statement.

There was discussion about the need for a skilled PR person on the committee. David Booth was suggested, but he is involved in too many other projects. Someone from the Grunter or the Times was suggested, or perhaps from the Laker. A financial person is also needed—maybe someone from Community Bank.

Bill Wiebe reported that he was impressed with the work that had been done by the Downtown Committee, and their report of the Town's needs, and perhaps someone from that group would be good on EDC. Don McBride was the Downtown chairman. Their approach had been that in this community, economic development and the quality of life go together, helping both the citizens and the businesses. That's really the thrust of EDC also.

S. Ganem said she was concerned that people don't really know what economic development is all about. Discussion turned to the group of people who came to the Selectmen's meeting and criticized the Route 28 Amendment. Would any information change their minds? People say they are interested in Planning—everybody is an expert and has a definite opinion. Perhaps a series of seminars could focus this interest in constructive ways?

Members agreed there was a need to get all the EDC members together, and find out if they wanted to continue on the committee. It was decided to keep the number at 9, as more than that would be an unwieldy group. To be sure to have a full house on February 9, members should be called on the telephone several days before with a reminder.

B. Wiebe handed out copies of the Economic Strategic Plan, and the group looked at the list of ongoing projects. The Chairman suggested that a report from the EDC could be on the agenda for each Selectmen's meeting, and if there were something to say, a report could be given. The Chamber of Commerce is so listed, even though there is not always a report. The Chairman of the Planning Board is going to be reporting regularly from now on.

There was discussion of the Pathways and TRAC committees. B. Jackson said

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that they are good for Town development, and perhaps the EDC could encourage them. TRAC is a private 3-town group and can function on its own. They're applying for funding. Pathways could go under the Recreation Department. They are very interested in developing cross-country ski trails, and are meeting with Sue Glenn.

SUPPORT OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

Shirley Ganem reported that she had been talking with Gretchen Stewart of the state DRED about seminars to help local businesses. She also talked with someone from the Wakefield Economic Development group, which started out with enthusiasm but has slowed down somewhat. They have just finished their Business Visitation. Stewart had suggested coordinating the seminars in Wolfeboro with Wakefield. The State offers a packaged half-day program for \$10 a person.

Ganem's first response had been that we'd prefer a free one, but Milligan said that people are willing to pay if they're interested. The Chamber of Commerce has drawn as many as 60 people who paid for past seminars.

For \$10 a person, the State would offer a half-day program, with someone from workmen's comp. For free, they could give a 2-hour program with a local insurance carrier. Stewart said she would also find a speaker from a business which has used this information to bring down their compensation costs. The group felt the free 2-hour program would be better, and early in the morning, probably from 7:30-9:30 a.m. Wakefield people could also be invited. This should probably be scheduled for some time near the end of February, but that's no good because of school vacation week. THURSDAY, MARCH 3 WAS A DATE AGREED UPON. The place needs to be selected, one with adequate parking.

PLANNING FOR AN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

The Chairman reported that the Governor has been talking about economic development. They don't feel that Wolfeboro needs help because we're wealthy and have a good quality of life. She suggested holding an economic development summit here, to point out the problems in Carroll County, which has the lowest income in the state. The whole region has poverty problems. Shirley said she could probably get the Governor to attend.

A. Milligan suggested that if the Governor could be persuaded to talk to Rotary, they would certainly get more involved in Economic Development. What region could be included? The southeastern quadrant around the lake: from Eaton south, and including Alton, Pittsfield, and Earnstead. The hope would be to make Wolfeboro "the hub" of economic vitality of the region.

Everybody was enthusiastic about this idea. A group needs to work out an agenda for this Economic Summit. It should probably be held in May or June and could include an excursion on the Judge Sewall. The Chambers of Commerce from some other communities might help.

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Bill Wiebe reported that there is a small nucleus of people from communities around the lake who are interested in heritage tourism. They could have a workshop on that subject. Another might be offered on marketing. Dick Green of DRED would be a good speaker. The leader of a program, which a number of EDC members had attended, on Marketing Public Entities would be excellent.

The day could start at 8:30, with registration at 8. There could be a couple of workshops, and a good keynote speaker at lunch. Health care is a possible topic. Any panel with experts, should have a consumer on it. Perhaps the focus should be on how to revitalize your town, perhaps the State's role in helping the community. Steve Rice is a possible speaker. Maybe someone from the office of tourism and travel.

Perhaps the format should be to start with a presentation by a speaker, followed by a panel discussion fielding questions. Andy Milligan offered to work with Shirley Ganem, in preparing a draft agenda.

MILLIGAN ON SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

He reported that he's been working with the State on behalf of two local businesses: Wickers and Phoenix. Both are growing and really need workers. At the time Phoenix took over Wolfeboro Products, they were down to 22 employees, are now up to 52, and need another 20. They expect to go to three shifts, seven days a week, with up to 120 workers.

Milligan said that we do not have a working-class employment problem in Wolfeboro. There are factory jobs for people who want them. There are also some jobs for skilled maintenance people. There are not enough people who want factory work. There was a discussion of problems in finding factory workers. Young mothers can't afford day care on \$5 per hour. Wickers employees are reporting a lot of carpal tunnel syndrome problems from repetitive motions.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A. Milligan reported that was on hold, awaiting decisions on land-use. Discussion turned to some past history of Wolfeboro, where companies that wanted to relocate to Wolfeboro were rebuffed, because the "powers-that-be" didn't want anyone offering higher wages than were standard in Town at that time. What we need is diversity of the economy. That doesn't mean smokestacks, etc. We want to keep Wolfeboro as nice as it is, but we need a diversified and vital economy.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erick H. Arlander

