

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

December 14, 1994

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PRESENT: Shirley Ganem, Chairman; Andy Milligan, Tony Triolo, Bill Wiebe, Paul Kimball, Barbara Jackson, Pamela Berg

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 a.m. in the First NH Bank Conference Room by Chairman Shirley Ganem, who turned it over to Bill Wiebe for a continuing discussion of the Main Street program.

This morning's tape was "Getting Organized" which showed public-private cooperative efforts in several towns. This was shown at the November 30 meeting, but a number of members present today had not seen it, and everyone felt it would be worthwhile to look at it again, since organization is the biggest job in getting a program underway.

McKinney, Texas, a town of 16,000, markets itself as "the outlet capital of Texas," but also wanted to retain its downtown. Through a hotel-motel tax, the city funded a full-time downtown coordinator to keep organizations working together in a cooperative effort. The new merchants had their organization, but the older merchants needed to be included. Special downtown needs were public restrooms, and parking facilities. They ran downtown block parties, and charge \$20 per month membership fee, to fund their organization.

Fergus Falls, MN, a town of 12,000 residents on the Otter Tail River, had a small group in operation, called the Riverfront Association. They enlarged the group, to include representatives of all types of local businesses. They started by increasing public awareness, and energized a lot of people to work on the downtown by their projects. They started "The great Race," now an annual event on the river. After three years of activity by many volunteers, they got a paid manager, funded by business contributions and a grant from the city. Standing committees work on special projects but for limited periods of time, which keeps volunteer participation high. They have an annual cleanup day, and have changed people's attitudes towards the town.

The center of Shelby, NC is the Courthouse Square. The city had an Economic Development Commission whose focus was the Town Square. An Uptown Shelby Association was formed, which enlisted participation and contributions from some 125 business and property owners in the area. They're working on special events, and put out a monthly newsletter. They have a year-round farmers' market, which greatly adds to the downtown business traffic. The commission encouraged redevelopment of the Masonic Temple into a mixed-use business and residential center.

The tape was finished at 8 a.m., and the group agreed that watching an enthusiastic video like this was about five times more effective than just talking about the concept of economic planning. In each community the EDC equivalent provided leadership and motivated the citizens.

Tony Triolo suggested that the Wolfeboro EDC hasn't yet demonstrated leadership. It needs to take on a small project and make it work. Shirley

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Ganem pointed out that Wolfefboro's EDC had been the prime mover in getting WEDCO (the Wentworth Economic Development Corp.) up and running. This is not widely known in the community, she added. Another example was given: the Wolfefboro 2000 Parking Committee which took on the project of getting the Town docks rebuilt. This was successfully accomplished with \$120,000 from the Town.

Local parking was discussed. Members stated that Wolfefboro has a congestion problem more than a parking problem. They agreed that there is always a place to park within about 1/8 of a mile of downtown. This is often the same distance people walk when shopping in a mall. But in Wolfefboro busy people often want to make a quick trip to the Post Office: this can present a parking problem in the summer.

Bill Wiebe pointed out that the way to get revitalization started is for the EDC to identify a need to benefit residents, entrepreneurs, professionals and then work to solve it. EDC needs to earn the credit for successfully accomplishing something. The Chamber of Commerce is doing some great promotional projects. Perhaps the EDC could help John Pernokas get appropriate tenants for his project on the former Horne Garage property. The suggestion had been made previously, it was recalled, that a video could be made of the work on that project from start to finish—the design choices, etc.

Wiebe showed a graphic presentation of the interrelationship of design, promotion, and economic aspects, which all overlap. Volunteers on a "Main Street Team" need knowledge of all these subjects, as well as a lot of enthusiasm. Joyce Davis, he reminded members, has been working on very similar plans with the Planning Board. Shirley Ganem read a chronology of Davis' activities and plans. A copy is be attached to these minutes.

There was a general discussion of recent newspaper stories about community development in Bethel, Maine, and the practice in some towns of giving retired people a modest tax credit in exchange for community service. Andy Milligan reported that Keene, NH, had found a legal way to get local business-tax money for economic development directly without going through Concord. He will investigate this.

Bill Wiebe reviewed the highlights of the tapes: getting organized and getting money for organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring. A healthy downtown is the basis for a healthy community, he said. Vision, goals and projects need to be documented — we have done a lot of that already. We need to encourage participation.

The next step, it was agreed, should be is a presentation to the Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Chamber of Commerce. The group suggested that it should be at a special meeting in a public place like the library. There should be a 10-minute introduction, a 10-minute film, a 10-minute wrap-up, and a question time. The aim is to arouse enthusiasm. A good

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catchy name is needed too—something which includes Wolfeboro. A later meeting would be held for the general public.

The group discussed the work done by the former Route 28 committee, and its lack of success in promoting broad public support. The aim of this program is to involve the whole community in a project that promotes the interests of the whole community.

In a further discussion it was decided to address the Selectmen alone. A subcommittee was chosen to make the presentation: Bill Wiebe, John Pernokas and Pam Berg. A likely date for this "EDC Report to the Selectmen" was discussed and the Selectmen's regular meeting on January 18 was tentatively selected. The subcommittee planning the meeting arranged to get together on Monday, December 19.

USER-FRIENDLY MANUAL - Paul Kimball said that it was completed and he would bring the final draft to the next meeting. This will be held on January 4.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik H. Arctander
Secretary

Date: October 11, 1994

To: Planning Board

From: Joyce Davis

Subject: Design Review

From the Economic Development Committee to the Downtown Committee to the Land Use Advisory Committee to the Planning Board itself, has come the recognition that our Downtown village is one of our strongest assets, both commercially and socially and should be treated with care. Events of the past year including building demolition, new building construction in the Downtown area, the work of various committees and the recently adopted Community Goals all suggest that the climate is right and public sentiment exists for a closer look at ways to assure that new construction and new development enhance our village character rather than detract from or destroy it. One need only travel to my hometown in Massachusetts or hundreds of others of communities throughout New England to find Main Streets and village centers destroyed by poor choices in building and site design. It does not have to happen here.

No one denies the political firestorm that discussion of Design Review can ignite. I believe we need to step back, find the areas of agreement between business, property owners, preservationists and interested citizens and find ways to implement the good ideas we share.

I'd like to suggest a way to move forward - a way that does not involve creating a new board or new ordinance but builds on existing regulation, private initiative, and public education. This proposal includes:

1. Offer a series of at least three **educational programs** in 1995 using professionals from the field of architectural design, landscaping, history and related fields to explore and explain the various components associated in preserving community character, achieving good building design, etc.; drawing on the experiences of other New England communities. Professional caliber programs would cost; I suggest they be funded through a combination of private gift, available grant monies and modest public support.

2. Make available to prospective developers and professionals working with in the field the **Design Manual** prepared by the Downtown Committee. This is a thoughtful document that has valuable information on what constitutes good design.
3. Encourage and support **community recognition** of buidling projects that enhance community character. (Chamber of Commerce involvement ?)
4. Develop an attractive **historic house marker** that can be purchased reasonably and displayed by owners of historic property in Town. (Historical Society involvement ?)
5. Improve and strengthen existing **sign regulations** in ordinance.
6. Improve **parking, lighting and landscaping requirements** in existing ordinance and site plan regulations.
7. Devlop a program of **voluntary compliance** incorporating a flexible set of design criteria.
8. **Town government should take the lead** and develop a comprehensive and quality design plan for lighting, trash receptacles, benches and signage and other improvements on Town properties.

Date: November 29, 1994
To: Wolfeboro Planning Board From: Joyce Davis

Re: Status of Project to Develop and Promote a Program of
Community Character Protection and Enhancement through Private Initiative,
Public/ Private Partnership, and Limited Government Involvement.



Project History

- October 11 Davis presents proposal to Planning Board outlining eight possible areas of action relative to design review and community character.
- October 11 Planning Board endorses concept and directs Davis to begin to develop implementation plan and process and report to Board in December.
- October 27 Davis meets with Bill Wiebe, EDC member, to discuss his views on protection of community character, specifically the *Main Street* program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation being considered by the EDC.
- Nov. 8 Davis, Shirley Ganem, Bill Wiebe, Randy Walker and John Pernokas meet at Mr. Pernokas' suggestion to discuss the **concept** of voluntary design review for his proposed new building at the Horne's Garage site. Group looks at preliminary architect's sketch and visits site to understand basic proposal. Discuss in broad terms the concepts of scale, compatibility with adjacent buildings, etc. Agreement to meet again with professionals, i.e. planner and or/ Pernokas architect.
- Nov. 11 Davis meets with Don Hughes and Wes Flierl, architect, to discuss implementation strategies of "Eight Points". (Who does what, when.) Agreement that education program component would best be handled by private community sponsor/sponsors who could fund and promote series. Hughes to pursue. Agreement that *Design Manual* needs revision, to eliminate "requirements" and to produce a document that would serve to effectively educate users and their agents. Flierl volunteers to review and comment. Only government (Board) involvement in the program should come from ordinance writing in regards to sign regulations or improvements in existing regulations.
- Nov. 14 Davis meets with the Wolfeboro Historical Society Executive Committee to discuss preservation of community character issues; specifically the possible Society involvement and

leadership in developing a program to identify historic houses and buildings with standardized signs. The Society has agreed to adopt this project and is in the process of setting up a committee within their group to move the project forward.

- Nov. 15 Follow-up meeting with Pernokas, Davis, Ganem & Wiebe. Planner was unable to attend. Continued discussion on development of a process for voluntary design review. Group consensus that the Town needs to develop some "guiding principles" which set forth basic concepts of preferred development. These principles could be used by the developer and also by "reviewer" to help measure a proposal against certain articulated standards. Davis agreed to summarize the conversation of last 2 meetings in narrative form for review by the group and possible expansion into newspaper article.
- Ongoing Davis contacts professionals working in the field of landscape preservation, rural communities, downtown village to research potential educational programs
- Nov. 29 Davis submits interim report to Planning Board.

Next Steps

Planning/Government

1. Set future meeting date for discussion by Planning Board of following items:
 - a. Development of "guiding principles"
 - b. Timing and structure of effort to develop voluntary design review guidelines
 - c. setting date for review of sign ordinance amendments
 - d. Possible support of *Main Street* program (EDC initiative)

Private Initiative

2. Identify programs and sponsor(s) for educational programs encompassing the theme of preservation of community character, enhancement of rural village, etc. Programs to begin late spring?
3. Communicate with Chamber of Commerce re: recognition awards for historic preservation or rehab work
4. Identify volunteer(s) to pull together all existing documents related to subject, e.g. Civic Profile Summary, Community Cornerstone Project Report, relevant sections of 1980 or recently revised Master Plan for comprehensive overview.