

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 16, 1994

Page 1

PRESENT: Vice-chairman Barbara Jackson; Tony Triolo, Bob Garland, Bill Wiebe, Andy Milligan

GUEST: John Catalano

The Committee met at 7:30 a.m. in the Planning Office Conference Room. After brief preliminaries, Tony Triolo introduced his friend and guest, Dr. John Catalano of Melvin Village, a Technology Consultant whose specialty is business planning, manufacturing methods, technology and strategic marketing. Catalano's PhD is in solid state physics, and he has broad experience in founding and selling electronic businesses both in this country and abroad. Tony had talked with him about Economic Development, and wanted the EDC to hear his ideas about Wolfeboro.

Catalano and his family have settled in Tuftonboro, after living and working abroad for many years, most recently in Connecticut.

He told of disastrous industrial overdevelopment he had seen in parts of Scotland and Wales caused by polluting businesses. The discussion turned to the search for clean business.

Catalano said that an efficient and sensitive Town government is most important. He loves the area, and Wolfeboro, but feels that in Wolfeboro decisions seem to be inconsistent; nothing is in writing. The regulations that are written get interpreted in various ways. This causes delays, and once the word gets around CEOs are turned off and their business goes somewhere else.

Another problem is transportation in and out. Clean companies require frequent visits from consultants, suppliers, and customers. You spend more time getting to Boston from Wolfeboro than from Boston to your destination. Connections to and from Manchester are difficult. Pease would be good, if developed. The problem is the movement of personnel, not products. The CEO needs to be able to get to his plant in Wolfeboro to inspect. A member suggested that you could bring him up on Friday and have him stay for the weekend.

Wolfeboro's environment is refreshing. Salaries can be lower. Lack of state tax, relative inexpensiveness of housing are also advantages. Also, the large cities of Boston and Montreal are fairly nearby.

Bill Wiebe listed five elements needed to attract people and businesses:

1. transportation
2. A university
3. Work Force
4. Cost of doing business
5. Lifestyle

Catalano agreed that Wolfeboro is big on lifestyle. Those other necessities can be worked on. The University would be difficult. He described a German company he had worked with in Keil, Germany. The

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 16, 1994

Page 2

government had put a branch of graduate school there to attract young professionals. Brooklyn Polytech, as another example, had moved their graduate center out to Long Island--which had encouraged the development of high-tech companies there.

Brewster is an asset, but it's a high school. A graduate school is much better. However, Brewster could be developed as an even greater conference center. Graduate students also provide a source of inexpensive labor. As a place to live, Wolfeboro is visually pleasing, and has a comfortable feeling. There are no drive-by shootings. There is privacy and lots of forest land.

Catalano described an industrial development in Melbourne, Florida, which is completely out of sight. He pointed out that almost any sort of high-tech industry does have some by-product that needs to be removed, or protected against. In some cases the effluent can be beneficial to the local environment--like acid to soften hard water, or industrial waste used for fill. But there are "cowboys" in business who pollute illegally, so businesses have to be screened carefully.

Members asked what specifically needed to be changed to improve Wolfeboro's attractiveness for business & industry. How can we change the attitude of those who don't want change? There's a small group of residents that gives the impression that they represent the whole town. The Route 28 study, which was tabled, was brought up as an example.

Catalano's responses, and group discussion:

\* Would a company say a project was too complicated to handle and throw it out, or would they find the right person to apply the skills needed to solve the problem? The Town needs to have an internal marketing plan.

\* Wage-earners want industrial development, but others don't. There needs to be a meeting of minds. Some people are afraid that change will destroy the attractiveness of Wolfeboro.

\* You need total quality management, and a mission statement. This should include the goal that development will not change the observable appearance of Wolfeboro from the roads.

\* There are two kinds of people here: those who are very interested in making a living, and those who don't need to.

\* The New England governmental structure, with no strong single leader like a mayor, means that there's no central viewpoint and no follow through, even when the goals have been accepted. The Selectmen accepted EDC's four main goals; but have gone nowhere with them.

\* Catalano described his personal experience with operating a hot-dog

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 16, 1994

Page 3

cart on Main Street. He felt stonewalled by the process of getting a permit, and then by a disagreement over the design of the cart. EDC members commented that store owners really don't want competition by carts.

\* Political decisions that block new businesses won't be tolerated by business managers interested in locating here. The word will be spread.

\* The vocal minority comes to presentations but they're against development, and always find something to object to.

Catalano was asked if Wolfeboro should join with other groups in the area working on economic development and he agreed that could be worthwhile but we should pick the group carefully. He believes that Route 28 out toward 16 is the right place for development. He warned the group to be sure they were talking with real business people, not just university professors and local enthusiasts.

There was discussion of the town land that the BDC is looking at, and Catalano asked if it was really the best property for the use. Members responded that its two main advantages are that the Town owns it, and it's properly zoned. He suggested a survey to be sure there wasn't better land available. It's worth spending the extra money for a better site--it's a small expense in the larger picture.

NEXT MEETING - APRIL 6

Bill Wiebe reported that Verne Crosier was willing to come at 7:30 on March 30 to talk with the group. There was discussion of the date--should the next meeting be the 30th (which was an every-other-week schedule), or should meetings to be held on the first and third Wednesday of the month?

The decision was to meet on the first and third Wednesdays, so the next EDC meeting will be on the first Wednesday of April, the 6th. Verne Crosier will come for a follow-up training session on the Community Renaissance workshops.

Respectfully submitted,

*Erik H. Arctander*

Secretary

