

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
September 7, 1994

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PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem, Bob Garland, Tony Triolo, Andy Milligan, and Paul Kimball

GUESTS: Dennis Plante and John Pernokis

Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. in the First NH Bank Conference Room and introduced Dennis Plante, whom she had invited as a prospective member. Plante said that he is a New Hampshire native who came to Wolfeboro in the 70s to work for the Kingswood Bank, and then continued when it became Bank East. He was on the Planning Board for a number of years. He is now freelancing, in the packaging business, presently working for a British firm that does packaging for medical materials. He does a lot of promotional and marketing work, and the Chairman explained that EDC was in special need of a marketing specialist.

She next introduced John Pernokis, a much more recent arrival, and asked him why he had decided to settle in Wolfeboro. He said that he had taken early retirement in 1992 after working for UPS for 29 years. He and his wife bought a home on Cotton Mountain in 1985. He said that "Wolfeboro is the first place I feel at home since I left home. It's a warm, friendly outgoing town that we both enjoy." He decided he was too young to retire, and has recently purchased two properties: the Scott house on South Main Street which he is renovating, and Horne's garage property on North Main, which also is greatly in need of renovation.

Mrs. Ganem's next question was: Why do investors come to Wolfeboro, and what can the Town do to encourage them to preserve the appearance of the Town? The discussion which followed covered the following points:

- * You choose to be here, so you conform. There's an economic incentive to keeping the village look.

- * We need a town committee willing to work with businesses who want to come here. Their help should be advisory.

- * Buildings need to be pleasing to the eye. There was a great uproar over the building of the Hamel marketplace, but it worked out very well.

- * The main appeal of this area is a lack of regulations. We can't have so many regulations that business people are hassled.

- * We need regulations to maintain the neighborhood village concept. This is what attracts people to Wolfeboro.

- * We need the approach "Let us help you through the process" to maintain the look.

- * We need to take a total town view, a long-range view, to keep the New England town look. You can control highway architecture.

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* Education is the key to keeping the town look. You can't stop development. We need to focus on revitalization. The town will die without it.

* Many people want to keep Wolfeboro a one-horse town.

* No business wants to be disliked. They want to cooperate.

* Getting through the system isn't always butting heads. Attitudes are important. There shouldn't be a feeling of pressure.

* The Planning Board is trying to make the process fair to all, but we need flexibility. Planning Board members have sometimes been intimidated by developers.

* The attitude of Town officials should be to make townspeople comfortable. You shouldn't have to wait for an appointment.

* It's not possible to solve everything today.

* Officials should return calls, and acknowledge people. The customers are most important to any business, and citizens are customers.

* Why do businesses come here? Simpler life, lack of big city atmosphere. You're treated like a real person.

* We need some diversification. We can't totally rely on the tourist dollar. Over the years we have lost diversity to focus on tourism. We're losing our employment base, and we need younger people in town.

* People have the idea that we need a "clean" business that just looks like a building with nobody there. We need businesses like the mill and Phoenix molding.

DISCUSSION OF OTHER PROJECTS - QUESTIONS

Property Development Manual - Paul Kimball reported that now the rush of the summer was over, his committee was getting back to work on this. He passed around a rough draft.

Access fees - The question of water and sewer hook-up fees was raised. Shirley Ganem explained that for a number of years there were no funds set aside for improvements, and no capital reserve funds built up, so access fees were put in place to build up funds for improvements. The charge is \$2,500 for each water hookup, and \$2,500 for each sewer hookup, but in many cases the charges were never collected. This is being worked on now.

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How to Grow Business in Wolfeboro - Sharon Severy and Bob Grott have produced a report on this subject. S. Ganem said she would make copies for the committee to discuss at the next meeting.

Seminar by National Trust for Historic Preservation - Bill Wiebe reported on their "Main Street Project," which is being tried in many towns and cities all over the country. Downtowns are hurting all over the country, largely because of large shopping malls.

The program's aim is to develop pride and purpose in the downtown area. It has a 4-point plan, very much like the ideas EDC has been working on.

1. Organization - a cooperative effort, public & private partnership which mobilizes volunteers. Works to build consensus and cooperation.

2. Design - all aspects of the Town, looking at its positive visual message to visitors. What has it to offer to make people feel at home? How do things work - parking, sidewalks, etc.

3. Promotion - changing the public's perception of what this municipal entity is, for both residents and visitors. Promotion of special events

4. Economic restructuring - strengthening the base - helping existing business, encouraging new business.

The program is project oriented - plans don't just gather dust on the shelves. A major step is analyzing the market - doing surveys, learning how to organize the project, and how to organize and recruit volunteers.

Bill was very impressed by the presentation. John Simpson of DRED has connections with this Main Street project, and Bill reported that he had been talking with him about using their visual aids and materials. He will look into the costs. P. Kimball moved that Bill find out more about the program. B. Garland seconded the motion and it passed, unanimously.

Seminar on Workman's Compensation - will probably be October 13 from 8-10 a.m. at the Bittersweet.

New Committee Members - Dennis Plante and John Pernokis both said they would like to serve on the EDC. On a motion by Paul Kimball, seconded by Andy Milligan, both were welcomed to membership in the Economic Development Committee, bringing the number back to its original 9.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 o'clock.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Arctander
Secretary

*Meeting Wednesday
Sept. 21, 7:30 a.m.*

