

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 1, 1995

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PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem, Vice-Chairman Barbara Jackson, and Members Pam Berg, Andy Milligan, Tony Triolo, Bill Wiebe, and Dennis Plante

GUESTS: Councilor Ray Burton and Wolfeboro Police Chief Stan Stevens

Chairman Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:35 in the First NH Bank Conference Room. She first briefly reviewed the discussions of the proposed traffic signal at Pickering Corner, and then introduced Councilor Ray Burton and Chief Stan Stevens, who had been invited to help the EDC formulate alternative solutions to the traffic problems there and throughout the Downtown area.

Burton said he had spoken the day before with Earl Kenison, the Deputy Commissioner of Transportation. The State views this as a dangerous intersection and met with the Selectmen to discuss it. When Wolfeboro was not enthusiastic about the State's proposed traffic signal and street widening, with loss of parking spaces, Kenison's response had been - fine, we'll put the money somewhere else. The Selectmen had then indicated that they did want to discuss some improvement at the corner. That's where things stood with the State as far as Burton knew.

Stan Stevens added that the Department of Transportation rated this intersection the seventh most dangerous in the State. Their criterion includes every accident within 500 feet of the intersection. Most of the accidents are rear-enders which occur at the day care center, because of sun in the drivers' eyes. If these accidents are subtracted, the intersection would not qualify as so dangerous.

Stevens said he would like to see some widening of the street, but not enough to lose 25 parking spaces. He believes that the main problem is from congestion and crosswalks downtown. There are too many crosswalks. A traffic light would cause more backups. He would prefer encouraging drivers to use alternate streets and living with the seasonal congestion. In his opinion directing traffic with policemen does not help the situation either. And no new crosswalks should be added.

Councilor Burton explained how the DOT often gets involved in local traffic problems. A community, like Conway for example, permits a lot of business development involving a lot of curb cuts on a major road, like Route 16. The DOT gets concerned, and eventually refuses to allow any more curb cuts. The Department of Transportation then says that there's too much traffic congestion, and they propose building a new road and bypassing the town. That's when the community gets up in arms.

Burton suggested that the EDC invite Leon Kenison of the traffic department to talk with them, to find out what the State's long-term regional road plans are. What about the Route 28-Middleton Road intersection, for example?

He handed out copies of his annual questionnaire. He also handed out a

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list of commissions and boards which are looking for new members. He added that the Governor has recommended that Ken MacDonald be appointed to the Adult Parole Board. Burton reminisced about the very pleasant two-day meeting which the Governor and Council had at the Pinckney Boathouse several years ago.

BACK TO THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM - Barbara Jackson asked Chief Stevens how the widening of roads would affect parking spaces. He said that the best thing to do would be to widen Center Street to allow more storage space for people turning onto South Main Street. Stevens said that a center lane on South Main needs to be devoted to left turns into the Day Care Center. Tony Triolo suggested inviting Kenison to talk about some other road problems, specifically on Route 109A.

Andy Milligan invited Councilor Burton to speak at a joint meeting of the Lions and the Rotary on March 28. Burton said he thought he had a conflict that evening, but would check the date.

Chairman Ganem asked for an overview of the State's economy. Burton responded that little real estate is moving, and County Deeds Offices are not busy and are laying people off. He added that high property taxes and the cost of electricity are impediments to creating new businesses. Small businesses dealing with renewable resources—wood, water, clean air, and tourist businesses—seem to be doing well and are adding a few employees. He suggested inviting State legislators in to talk.

Tony Triolo asked about State job training programs. He said he had inquired about training for sewing machine operators, but was told that this would not qualify because it was not a "life-long retained skill." Triolo said his work force has grown from 32 to 84 people. He has had to institute his own training program, and add benefits, to find employees. A. Milligan added that the State job training program does not seem interested in training workers for manufacturing jobs.

Bill Wiebe gave Councilor Burton a brief overview of EDC's participation in the Main Street Program. Burton mentioned some other programs funded by the State, and said he would talk with Commissioner Bartlett about a regional council for economic programs. Cynthia Briggs, a Selectman in North Conway, is this region's representative on a matching grant program with \$300,000 to create jobs with new businesses. He encouraged the EDC, the Chamber of Commerce, and County Commissioners to investigate many potential sources of funding for business development in the State.

A. Milligan brought up a Commercial Kitchen which is being developed in Lancaster for joint use by a number of small food preparation businesses.

BACK TO THE TRAFFIC - Chairman Ganem asked the group if Mr Kenison of the Department of Transportation should be invited to discuss the State's 10-year road plan. All agreed that they would like to meet with him as soon as possible.

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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANUAL - The Chairman reported that Paul Kimball had promised to have this completed by the end of March. Kimball plans to drop his membership in the EDC for at least a year, as he is too busy to continue with it.

NEW BUSINESSES IN TOWN - A. Milligan stated that hw believed there is presently no land in Town zoned for new businesses. Barbara Jackson said she would bring in a report and map showing what is available.

A. Milligan reported that NYNEX Gateway Service can provide internet "ports." He is trying to develop internet as a membership benefit for joining the Chamber of Commerce. Chamber of Commerce membership for a business costs \$200. Milligan said there were other benefits to membership too.

WOLFEBORO - OUR TOWN - Bill Wiebe and his committee reported that their next presentation would be made on Tuesday, March 8 at Rotary. They have already addressed the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, the media, and Lion's Club. Others to be scheduled are the Chamber of Commerce, Technical Review Committee. Other possible audiences to involve are the Governor Wentworth Arts Council, Friends of the Cate Park Bandstand, Village Players (new owners of the Masonic Hall), Friends of Music, Brewster Academy, Historical Society, WEDCO.

Bill Wiebe said that more work needs to be done in training the project leaders. We need to get the average voter involved and informed about issues in town—possible traffic light, town warrants, etc. Possible projects to get working on are visual appeal (working with the Planning Board), the waterfront, a SCORE-type organization, and support for existing businesses. Additional volunteers need to be recruited for these projects. We need people to recruit and implement these projects, not just to be figureheads.

Wiebe reported that all the historical societies around the lake have been involved in the Heritage New Hampshire programs and they are doing an inventory of historic sites.

NEW MEMBERS - Someone is needed for marketing and promotion, and T. Triolo and B. Jackson both recommended John Catalano, who has told Tony he is willing. The Chairman said she would discuss this appointment with the Selectmen. The members unanimously approved Catalano as a replacement for Paul Kimball. Mrs. Ganem said she would also talk with Gene Leone, who had previously been considered for membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING - MARCH 15

Respectfully submitted,

Erik H. Arctander

