

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

May 3, 1995

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PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem; Tony Triolo, Bob Garland, Andy Milligan, John Pernokas, Barbara Jackson, Dennis Plante, John Catalano

GUESTS: Town Manager Paul Skowron; Dennis Bean of Wolfeboro Electric Department and three representatives from PSNH:

Gary Lemay - Marketing Services Manager  
Pat McDermott - Community Development Manager  
Gordon Tuttle - Business Development Manager

Chairman Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. in the First NH Bank Conference Room.

The guests were present at the invitation of John Pernokas, who had offered to get information about the cost of putting the power lines through the center of Wolfeboro underground.

Gary Lemay spoke first. As an engineer, he had been involved in burying the wires in Laconia 8 or 10 years ago. The only barriers are money and easements, he said, and a ballpark figure for costs is \$1,000,000 per mile, or about \$200 per foot. The first step is have an engineering design company prepare a plan. That would probably take 4 months to a year. Then the plan has to go out to bid. The phone company would have to be actively involved also. Lemay described the types of materials used, the underground vaults and cables, and the problems of coordination and planning for future wiring needs and changes in customers' service. In comparison, overhead wiring costs from \$50-100,000 per mile.

Pat McDermott spoke next. Another option would be moving the poles one block back from Main Street, which would be a lot cheaper but would get them out of view. This is not a good time to look for grant money for projects like this, he said. Money will be coming through the State, instead of from Federal programs. There may be more flexibility when the money comes from the State, but there will be less total money.

McDermott was familiar with the "Our Town" program, and with the Community Renaissance program which EDC members went through with Bruce Mayberry several years ago. PSNH assists with funding for a number of programs like this through UNH, since encouraging community development also encourages need for additional electricity. McDermott suggested that Wolfeboro do a followup Business Visitation, to assess the improvement of the local business climate since we did this several years ago.

Currently UNH and PSNH are working on a study of the potential for retail development of communities throughout New Hampshire, and are analyzing the figures now. McDermott reported that Wolfeboro is far ahead of most communities in strategic planning. He offered to come back to a future meeting with a preliminary report on the specific Wolfeboro information

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from this study. It will focus on retail business, and what sort of mix would be most viable for Wolfeboro. The EDC meeting of June 7 was selected as the date for him to return.

(Secretary's note: I cannot tell from my notes, or from the tape, whether it was McDermott or Tuttle who is involved in this study, and will come back and talk with us. I believe it was Mr. McDermott. John Fernokas thinks it was Mr. Tuttle.)

John Catalano's Marketing Report

Mrs. Ganem has asked EDC's newest member, John Catalano, to report on his observations of EDC's work. He had prepared a list of questions which he wanted the group to answer in order to define exactly where we are going. As he said, "One thousand people taking one step are better than one thousand steps in all directions. As a marketing person he wanted to know EDC's boundaries for strategic planning. He also wanted to see a priorities list: what could we do that would be best for Wolfeboro. It's great to talk about underground wiring through the center of Town, but is that realistic? We need to be cruel and hard about our priorities.

First of all, what were our resources and authority. There was general agreement that our resources and authority come from the Selectmen. They had accepted our mission statement and EDC should be considered staff members for the Selectmen working on economic development. Andy Milligan cited the formation of the Business Development Corp. and assistance for Phoenix Custom Molding as accomplishments. But on the whole, the EDC has not offered the Selectmen any specific plans and has not received any direction or funding from them.

Shirley Ganem responded that she was planning to set up a Community Calendar, which has repeatedly been listed as a need. Barbara Jackson has agreed to handle this.

Catalano responded that a community calendar was not immediate enough. Communication and public relations should be handled by some other group. As for the "Our Town" project, it's like religion, Mom, and apple pie. What the EDC needed was specific plans for immediate Economic Development projects. What is the team going to do: Bring in small new businesses? Develop Town business property? We need a main project, which will yield immediate results.

Tony Triolo suggested developing the Town business property out on 109A. We could all be focusing on that. There was general agreement that we needed a consensus meeting, to come to some agreement as to just what our focus should be. Unfortunately, Bill Wiebe is away, and will not be back until June. The PSNH man is scheduled to return for the first meeting in

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June. He will be asked to come on the 21st instead, so the consensus meeting can be held June 7.

The Town Manager was asked about the current state of negotiations over the Town property on 109A. He described problems with the old landfill, and the lack of suitable access from the main road. This could be very expensive. One solution would be to deed the whole property to a private business or a developer, and let them handle the cost of improvements. To this, it would have to go to Town Meeting. Another solution would be to deed the property to WEDCO. Perhaps the Town should go for another block grant next year to come up with development money.

The next meeting, on May 17, will be devoted to further discussion of John Catalano's observations.

It was now 9:30 and the meeting was breaking up. Two last-minute comments were made: (1) The meeting with PSNH was very worthwhile in that it was evident that the cost of burying the electric lines through the center of Town was prohibitive; and (2) Representatives from the two largest employers in Town (Brewster and the Hospital) should be members of the Economic Development Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rosemary Arctander*  
Secretary

