

**WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, November 28, 2006  
MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Bob Reid, Chairman, Tony Triolo, Denise Roy-Palmer, David Tower, Mary DeVries, Members.

**Member Absent:** Mike Cooper, Gene Leone, Members.

**Staff Present:** David Owen, Town Manager, Lee Ann Keathley, Secretary.

*Chairman Reid opened the meeting at 8:11 AM.*

**Discussion Items**

- **Guest: Dan Eastman, State of NH Department of Resources & Economic Development**  
Bob Reid informed Mr. Eastman the Town is in the process of updating its Master Plan, consisting of 11 chapters. He stated the business community has not been in the forefront for a long time and through the re-establishment of the EDC, that such is being attempted. He stated the Economic Base Chapter Committee recommended an Economic Development Director for the Town of Wolfeboro and a Professional Business Park.

Tony Triolo questioned whether other towns in NH have such a position.

Dan Eastman replied yes, usually larger towns. He stated many towns that do not have an Economic Development Director; the responsibility is placed onto the Town Planner and/or Town Manager. He recommended looking at the vision of the Town and determine where you want the Town to be in fifty years. The need for such depends upon the goals and spending.

Tony Triolo stated the Committee would like a person within the bureaucracy.

Dan Eastman stated economic development is a slow process and accomplishments are difficult to measure.

Tony Triolo stated Wolfeboro has unutilized assets.

Bob Reid stated the Town has vibrancy; and educational facility, hospital, etc. He stated between 1995 and 2003 there was a net increase of 1 business.

Dan Eastman stated that Wolfeboro is isolated however, people like that. He recommended attracting businesses that fit the Town.

Bob Reid stated the theme of the Master Plan is based on "The Oldest Summer Resort in America." He stated the thought is to expand tourism into the winter months and that the Committee is not looking to accomplish big box stores or manufacturers.

Dan Eastman stated there may be resistance to a business park due to traffic issues.

Bob Reid stated they are attempting to alleviate existing traffic issues by creating a business park.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated a lot of Downtown businesses are real estate, mortgage and insurance companies.

Bob Reid stated there is not a zoning problem and that there are tremendous opportunities throughout the Downtown Corridor or expanded Downtown corridor; the location of Wickers on Route 109-A. He stated the Town currently has infrastructure issues; under a State mandated water and sewer moratorium. He stated there are also road issues. He stated a workforce housing development is proposed to be built near the Wickers building. He stated the Committee would like to coordinate with the State in this and other endeavors. He stated WEDCO was developed through the Town's EDC in 1993.

Dan Eastman stated that no one comes to NH from the money given out by the State. He stated there are other alternatives for financing that could attract businesses such as TIF (Tax Increment Financing). He stated that if people / businesses are interested in coming to the community, they will call the Town Office and the experience they have with the individual they speak to will decide whether they come to Wolfeboro or not.

Bob Reid stated that Wolfeboro's Town Planner is an excellent person however, cannot handle the load. He stated the Town Manager has an economic development background and the Town officials are supporting the Master Plan. He stated the Town won an award in 1995 for their Master Plan however, it was then left undone.

Dan Eastman stated there needs to be communication, procedure and balance.

Tony Triolo stated the procedure in the Town Offices is not difficult however, the people need to be told upfront the issues.

Bob Reid stated Huggins Hospital is in the process of a major redevelopment.

David Tower stated the most difficult decision regarding the project revolved around the question of whether the hospital was staying or leaving. He stated it is a huge project and there is a risk due to the water issues.

Dan Eastman stated that people come to NH because of the quality of life.

Dave Owen stated and due to the lesser tax burden.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated the existence of the hospital produces a rippling effect within the community; a person going to the hospital for an appointment may then go to the bank, the florist, etc.

Dave Owen stated the hospital is essential.

David Tower stated it is important to realize that businesses have many alternatives and if there is no clear directional plan and response, the business will be taken elsewhere.

Dave Owen stated the Town needs to send a message / signal that the Town is open to certain kinds of development, the Town is a welcoming community and will work with the people through the permitting process. He stated the conveying of such is very important. He stated that he and the Town Planner were the Economic Development Directors for a town and their goal was to increase quality development to add to the tax base and good paying jobs to the community.

Tony Triolo stated that Mr. Owen's comments have never said in this Town.

Dan Eastman questioned whether Wickers is owned by the Town and what type of business the Town is looking to place there (ie: medical devices).

Denise Roy-Palmer replied no.

Bob Reid stated the Master Plan has little to say about manufacturing; speaks to light industry. He stated there are a significant people who live in Wolfeboro however, does not know how to approach those people.

Dan Eastman recommended contacting Paul Montrone who brought Fisher Scientific to NH from NY. He stated that Mr. Montrone is the type of person to contact and get on board for support.

Bob Reid stated the Committee would like to partner with the State and create synergy because the Town has a hospital and educational institution to protect and the Committee wants to make it viable so that organizations can survive. He stated the Town needs a vibrant business in Wickers. He stated GI Plastek has taken off and the Town is not opposed to that type of business. He requested that Wolfeboro remain in the minds of the State so that if someone calls with interest in NH that Wolfeboro comes to mind.

Tony Triolo stated Wolfeboro is close the Route 16 corridor which opens opportunity from the Seacoast area.

Dan Eastman recommended that if someone calls to ask about Wolfeboro that the Town is specific and lets the person know the facts because it may not be a fit for their needs. He cautioned that whatever direction the Committee heads in, there will always be resistance and small groups of people can be very vocal. He recommended the Committee review things thoroughly prior to release of information to the public. He stated the largest challenge is to be prepared because people make issues. He commented that Wolfeboro is a unique community with a lot of opportunity.

Bob Reid questioned whether there has been any interest in Wickers.

Dan Eastman replied he is unaware however, would look into such. He questioned who is marketing Wickers.

Tony Triolo stated he is the listing agent and former plant manager that built it in 1992. He stated the lot was bought from the Town and is zoned commercial.

Bob Reid stated the Master Plan Economic Base Chapter Committee recommended two things in the attempt to move forward; Economic Development Director and a Business Park.

Dan Eastman stated there is a lot the Committee can do such as placing a notice in the tax bill and contacting prominent people in the Town. He stated the attitude at the Town Hall is critical and will be the basis for a person's decision. He offered to provide a comparison analysis / statistics for new businesses.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated that all businesses recruited to NH comes from a person's recommendation.

Bob Reid questioned whether Wickers is on Town sewer.

Tony Triolo replied no. He stated the property is advertised on the State's website.

Bob Reid commented the State now knows what Wolfeboro is looking for. He stated Wolfeboro has an uneducated workforce who end up on unemployment during the winter months. He thanked Mr. Eastman for attending the EDC meeting.

Dan Eastman stated the State partners with a lot of different organizations such as USDA.

Dave Owen stated the Town has its own electric department and such could promote the Town.

Bob Reid stated Wolfeboro currently has the 25<sup>th</sup> lowest tax rate in the State.

Dan Eastman stated the Town could be an ambassador to the people without an Economic Development Director (EDD). He stated that often when the position is reviewed during the budget cycle, it is often cut.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated there are not immediate results if an EDD is employed.

Bob Reid stated there is an immediate result through the treatment of existing businesses.

Dan Eastman stated that if adjustments in a budget have to be made, those adjustments should not include benefits and wages.

Bob Reid stated that such is not the intent.

Mary DeVries stated there is a need to send a message to the voters that the existing employees are burdened and there is a need for an Economic Development Director.

**It was moved by David Tower and seconded by Tony Triolo to adjourn the November 28, 2006 Economic Development Committee meeting. All members voted in favor.**

*There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 AM.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Keathley  
Secretary