

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

January 8, 2013

MINUTES

Members Present: Charles Wibel, Co-Chairperson, Dave Bowers, Selectmen's Representative, Linda Murray, Selectmen's Alternate, Paul O'Brien, Zach Tarter, Mike Connolly, Frank Giebutowski, Bob Ness, Mary DeVries, Members.

Members Absent: Denise Roy-Palmer, Co-Chairperson, Tony Triolo, Member.

Staff Present: Dave Owen, Town Manager, Rob Houseman, Director of Planning & Development, Lee Ann Keathley, Secretary.

Charles Wibel opened the meeting at 7:30 AM at the Huggins Hospital Board Room.

Consideration of Minutes

December 11, 2012

Corrections:

Page 3, The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls Magazine Advertisement, 3rd paragraph; strike "not"

Page 4, The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls Magazine Advertisement, motion; add "Denise Roy-Palmer abstained."

Page 4, Billboard, 3rd paragraph; strike "email" & replace with "contact"

It was moved by Paul O'Brien and seconded by Frank Giebutowski to approve the December 11, 2012 Economic Development Committee minutes as amended. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Discussion Items

➤ **Billboard**

Bob Ness reported the billboard is lighted.

➤ **Website Analytics**

Paul O'Brien demonstrated how to utilize Google Analytics. He stated reports could be run on a regular basis to view usage of the Town's website. He noted the bounce rate for Wolfeboro is extremely high and that reports could be created that pair specific elements together.

Rob Houseman asked whether the effectiveness of the website as it relates to a mobile browser could be analyzed.

Paul O'Brien replied yes.

Rob Houseman stated it would be helpful to know what the mobile users are utilizing the website for and questioned the effectiveness of the "Tourist Information" link. He stated the data collected could be used to determine whether the Town should provide a mobile application.

Bob Ness recommended a monthly report be sent to the secretary's email and forwarded by her with the agenda and minutes for the following meeting.

Paul O'Brien stated it may be useful for the Chamber of Commerce to have access to the site.

Dave Owen stated he requested the tourist information button be activated for counting purposes in November 2012 and would follow up regarding the issue.

Linda Murray read the EDC's Mission Statement and stated that in the beginning of the year she felt the Committee and the Chamber of Commerce were joint partners. However, when the EDC voted not to contribute to the advertisement in The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls Magazine, she stated she felt the two entities split direction. In addition, she stated the Committee received negative comments from the Budget Committee regarding the billboard. She recommended the Committee review the Economic Development Strategic Plan study and feels the Committee needs to reset their goals and move in a definitive direction. She stated she has been frustrated at the last couple of meetings and feels the Committee has lost their focus. She stated the study reported there were not enough accommodations in the Town.

Frank Giebutowski disagreed and clarified that the study stated the Town lost jobs in the accommodation sector.

Linda Murray stated the accommodations in the Town are outdated and the Town needs to provide space and rooms that attract people.

Dave Bowers stated the Town is a tourist town and such needs to be recognized and recommended working closely with the Chamber of Commerce. He stated manufacturing businesses are not going to be found in Wolfeboro.

Paul O'Brien stated the Town has an incredible amount of assets that include the artists, Jennifer Kalled and Lisa Nellthrop and feels the Town is not doing a good job promoting such. He stated artists do not go out of their way to promote themselves; however, the Town should have an ethic to promote such and mentioned "Wine with Ted."

Linda Murray questioned the focus of the Committee and noted the focus groups came from the Master Plan and the study. She questioned how the Committee could best utilize the reports and information from Google Analytics.

Charles Wibel stated the Committee's discussions have included sustainable higher paying jobs. He stated to build a new hotel, such has to be a sustainable year round community.

Rob Houseman stated it is important to view Wolfeboro as an employment center of a micropolitan and not simply as a tourist based industry. He recommended focus should be directed towards growing the existing businesses and sustaining the village core while creating a stable tax rate. He stated from his perspective, the website is mostly used by the citizens.

Paul O'Brien stated promoting local business is being handled capably by the Chamber of Commerce.

Bob Ness stated the retirement sector of the community is being ignored and noted that as the Town ages the economic reality will focus around the Huggins Hospital facility.

Linda Murray stated the Town remains a tourist and second home community.

Zach Tarter recommended the Committee come to an agreement, set goals and further define those goals.

Dave Bowers noted the tax structure is financed primarily by retired people who are not building new businesses.

Frank Giebutowski stated the Committee represents the taxpayers and the Committee was supposed to look for ways to attract good jobs for people who live in Wolfeboro; however the Committee has not done such. He agreed the Committee should review the mission of the EDC and, although the Committee can support the Chamber of Commerce, he stated he is not in favor of funding what the Chamber of Commerce wants to do.

Paul O'Brien questioned the image of the Town and recommended a brand of the Town be determined; noting currently the brand is episodic. He stated the Town struggles with image constantly.

Charles Wibel stated the Town offers lifestyle of incredible charm, medical facilities, sports entities and recreation. However, he noted the only thing missing is sustainable business.

Bob Ness stated the environment does not encourage responsibility or accountability. He requested a monthly report from Google Analytics and information of comparable communities (such as Boothbay Harbor, ME, Camden, ME and Naples, ME) be provided by Staff and each member provide a list of goals for the Committee prior to the next meeting.

➤ **Economic Revitalization Zone**

Dave Owen stated WEDCO hosted a meeting on 12/18/12 with the representatives of the three owner's property within the Business Park that was designated as an Economic Revitalization Zone and Robert Berry, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). He noted Mr. Berry explained the tax credit program to the representatives.

Town Manager/BOS Report

Dave Owen stated the Budget Committee Public Hearing on the 2013 budget is scheduled for 1/8/13, 7 PM at the Wolfeboro Inn Ballroom.

Dave Bowers reviewed the Middleton Road Warrant Article.

It was moved by Paul O'Brien and seconded by Charles Wibel to adjourn the January 8, 2013 EDC meeting. All members voted in favor.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Ann Keathley

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