

## WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

August 13, 2013  
MINUTES

**Members Present:** Denise Roy-Palmer, Vice-Chairman, Zach Tarter, Chairman, Linda Murray, Selectmen's Alternate, Mary DeVries, Alan Harding, Mike Connolly, Charles Wibel, Kathy Eaton, Members.

**Members Absent:** Dave Bowers, Selectmen's Representative, Cindy Patten, Member.

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

**Staff Absent:** Rob Houseman, Director of Planning & Development.

*Zach Tarter opened the meeting at 8:00 AM at the Huggins Hospital Board Room.*

### **Consideration of Minutes**

**July 9, 2013**

Corrections:

Page 1, Pathways Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph; change "recreational" to "recreation"

Page 1, Pathways Committee, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> line; change "he" to "himself"

**It was moved by Linda Murray and seconded by Mike Connolly to approve the July 9, 2013 Economic Development Committee minutes as submitted. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.**

### **Old Business**

#### ➤ **Economic Revitalization Zone**

Dave Owen stated the informational meeting scheduled for the property owners within the Lehner, Pine and Center Streets ERZ and sponsored by WEDCO was held however, no one attended. He stated Robert Barry, State of NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, Denise Roy-Palmer and he were the only people present at the meeting.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated Mr. Barry prepared handouts for the attendees and questioned whether the Committee would like the information forwarded to the property owners. She recommended a press release as well.

Charles Wibel recommended a letter be distributed to the local real estate agencies regarding the designation of the two zones, including the information packet prepared by Robert Barry.

Mary DeVries stated the Chamber of Commerce has an accompanying piece relative to the designation of the zones to be included with the packet of information.

Dave Owen stated he would forward a copy of the maps to Ms. DeVries.

Zach Tarter stated he would prepare a letter for the packet for distribution to the realtors.

#### ➤ **EDC Webpage Content**

Dave Owen stated the model webpage was up as of this morning and reviewed such.

Following discussion of the model webpage, the Committee agreed to the following;

- Link 1 designate for Economic Revitalization Zones
- Move available commercial properties to Link 2
- Strike “Committee” in heading (should read Economic Development)
- Include 2 photographs of the Downtown area (contact Bob Ness for such; possible aerial view, reuse picture displayed on billboard)

Dave Owen stated he would seek permission from Bob Ness regarding use of his photographs for the webpage.

Linda Murray recommended a button on the Town’s homepage for the Economic Development page.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **➤ 2014 Budget**

Staff distributed the 2012 expenditures and proposed 2014 budget which included year-to-date expenditures.

Dave Owen reviewed each line item of the budget.

Referencing the billboard, Linda Murray stated there are bushes growing up in front of the billboard (the billboard being not very visible) and recommended such be cut back.

Denise Roy-Palmer stated the billboard wrap was guaranteed to last two years; noting the cost to rent the billboard for an additional year is \$2400.

Charles Wibel noted \$1100 would be remaining in that line item.

Denise Roy-Palmer questioned the expended costs in 2012 for the development of the Economic Development webpage.

Dave Owen replied \$300.

Charles Wibel asked if there would be ongoing maintenance once the page is completed.

Dave Owen stated the cost for such would be included in the annual maintenance agreement. He recommended encumbering 2013 funds for costs associated with marketing bike week.

Mary DeVries recommended a marketing subcommittee be established.

Kathy Eaton volunteered for such. She noted the billboard has a bubble in the wrap.

#### **➤ Xpress Natural Gas**

Dave Owen distributed an article from the NH Union Leader, dated 8/7/13, titled “Clean Energy to build natural gas compression plant in Pembroke.” He stated Xpress Natural Gas specializes in delivering compressed natural gas to facilities throughout New England that are not served by natural gas pipelines. He stated Plymouth State University and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital are two of their New Hampshire clients and have also been in contact with Huggins Hospital and Brewster Academy. He stated the firm wants to gauge the interest of the Town of Wolfeboro in hosting such a facility. He stated Brewster Academy recently decided to convert from oil to propane.

Dave Owen stated the Town decided to go into the utility business in 1897; noting the Town electrified earlier than surrounding communities. He stated there is a model for starting such and noted there would be a need for a cost study, site development and development of a distribution system. He stated it would be a large undertaking.

Denise Roy-Palmer asked if anyone is aware of an existing site.

Dave Owen stated one has not yet been built.

Charles Wibel asked how the Town owned electric company is perceived by the Town.

Linda Murray stated a study was done and the consensus of the committee was to keep the electric company. She stated a study of the costs and how the distribution system would affect street construction is necessary.

Paul O'Brien stated Plymouth State University formed a committee to review such a proposal and received a federal grant to assist with the development of such; noting the savings (over the capital costs) is amortized at 18 months. He stated he would propose reviewing the corridor from the high school to Brewster Academy to understand that segment of Town and then consider the Route 109A corridor (Sugar Hill, Abenaki). He recommended soliciting the stakeholder's interest from both segments of Town and determine whether such a proposal for the Town would make sense. He stated he has no self or monetary interest in the company. He noted the benefits for Huggins Hospital and large consumers are very large. He stated the Town has three utility licenses therefore, the Town knows how to run a utility.

Mike Connolly stated the hospital has considered it for the last couple of years and noted a significant financial savings from such.

Charles Wibel recommended burying the power lines if the roads are dug up for the installation of the system.

Paul O'Brien stated Rob Houseman has consumption numbers for Huggins Hospital, Kingswood High School, Carpenter School and Brewster Academy.

Kathy Eaton stated gas could be used to generate electricity.

Alan Harding recommended considering what they have to offer.

Charles Wibel stated there is no guarantee that after it is installed the companies would buy into it.

Zach Tarter recommended tabling the discussion until Rob Houseman could be present to comment on the discussion.

*The Committee tabled further discussion to 9/9/13 when Rob Houseman is available to provide comment and the Committee has the opportunity to review the materials.*

## **New Business**

### **➤ Center Street Zoning**

Kathy Eaton questioned whether the Committee should take a position regarding the Planning Board's proposed zoning changes for Center Street. She questioned whether the Committee should be concerned about impact to the Downtown businesses.

Dave Owen stated the proposed zoning would keep out box stores.

Mary DeVries stated there is a lot of misinformation being distributed regarding the proposed zoning changes.

Charles Wibel stated he feels the zoning changes are positive and doesn't feel the proposal will harm Downtown especially given the environmental protection regulations enforced by Federal, State and local government. He stated the proposal would eliminate the potential for another business such as Trites.

Linda Murray stated she looks at it in terms of smart growth and wants vacancies in the Downtown area to be addressed. She stated she wants to expand the Downtown and make it healthy.

Staff stated she would provide the Committee with the Planning Board minutes and all other pertinent information relative to the Board's efforts the last several years to address the rezoning of Center Street.

## **Town Manager/BOS Report**

### **• Electric Rates**

Dave Owen stated the BOS adopted the new electric rates at its July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting; noting the rate will be decreased by 3 cents per Kilowatt hour effective 1/1/14.

**It was moved by Alan Harding and seconded by Kathy Eaton to adjourn the August 13, 2013 EDC meeting. All members voted in favor.**

*There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 AM.*

Respectfully Submitted,

*Lee Ann Keathley*

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