

Economic Development Advisory Committee – Business Owners Forum

Minutes – October 27, 2016

Attendees: Terri Pastori, Nicholas Del'Etoile, James Morgan, Stephen Daly, George Sioras, John Potucek, Craig Cunningham, Christina Gossel, Scott Graves, Gordon Graham

Absent, Andrew White,

Meeting called to order at 7:07 pm.

Terri announced that the Derry Survey will be available this week on EDAC Facebook Page, and Town Website.

George: Discussed three financing programs for business development:

- Rockingham Business Development
- Revolving Loan Fund
- 79E State Program for business owners to fix building, freezes taxes for 5-7 years so that business doesn't have to pay higher taxes once improvements are made for several years.

Topics of interest:

Carina Huftgren: Carina's Cakes, came to learn.

Melanie Davis: Rail Trail Café: Holiday Decorations, businesses on Broadway and Crystal Ave are being asked to join in Festival of Trees, Rotary will raise funds through voting. Rotary will develop QR Map to help people find participating businesses. Melanie attended Complete Streets Forum in Concord, it was a day long forum, she would recommend a forum in Derry. Complete Streets is a plan that the Town would put together to plan for economic development and to make the town livable. George indicated that state is working on a model ordinance, once that is complete we will be talking to the state. Melanie indicated that plans will be developed custom for each community. Mentioned that zoning needs to be changed downtown so that we can take advantage of lifestyle differences. John mentioned how the entire program would integrate so well with Derry we have the downtown, the Rail Trail. George mentioned that Derry is considered a top choice for program.

Alissa from Message Therapy, no real concerns, wanted to be hear.

Katie concerned that Crystal Ave business owners get left out when we have discussions about downtown.

Andy Day - Cask and Vine, participation is tough, he has been running with This is My Derry. Andy went around to the business owners in Derry, to better understand what is going on, we need to have Town Officials hitting the pavement and talking to business owners. Christmas Tree idea is outstanding. Best way to get business to participate is talk to them. Face time is huge to make this works. Create a bigger cause than ourselves. This is My Derry is making the town better. This town has a lot of excitement behind it, and we can't compartmentalize we need to talk in person and work together.

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Jim asked about a Town Tree, good response. Social media is two dimensional, but without the facial expressions and tone, much of communication is lacking. Maybe EDAC should do some outreach by getting together at business establishments.

Carina lots of work running your own business, came tonight because two people stopped and asked her to come by. Facebook can be very good, but not consistent. We need to have town officials get out to meet business owners. Having a regular cadence of meetings with business owners is good idea.

Turd Herders - Melanie, business started scooping dog waste out of people's yards. Opened business in downtown, lots of traffic and in the middle of great businesses. Family business, they think Derry is a great place, they chose Derry because of potential. Came to the meeting because she was asked. Has found that other businesses help each other. Stressed that face to face is needed for us to work with businesses.

Randall - All good ideas.

Jason Phelps, not a business owner in town yet. Looking for location to site Mead and Cider business. Came to see what business climate is like.

Donna Laporte: Moved Ultimate Attraction from East Derry to Broadway. Parking is biggest issue for first floor merchants. Plenty of parking, no enforcement. Merchants Row parking has two-hour time limit, but no enforcement. Abbot Lot needs to be cleaned up, leaves, cigarette butts, a little effort to do a clean-up in the lot would make a big difference. Need to educate business people downtown to be leave parking open for customers. During the winter the road into the parking lot needs to be scraped clean and well treated for ice due to grade.

Randall: When Manchester had parking problems a statistic that they managed to is that people won't drive more than two minutes to look for a parking space. Proximity to parking is critical.

Melanie: consider parking garage at Abbott Court. Jim, what about meter parking, deterrent or beneficial. Andy made a big sand box for everybody to play in, and the businesses all work together, good environment and will attract more business.

Steve Trefethen: Summerview Real Estate, business owners are in a good place. Snow removal is critical, town manager needs to ensure that snow is removed quickly and that parking is open, if people can't get through the sidewalks, and find parking they won't come downtown. Jim pointed out that we have snowbanks downtown, because we leave snowbanks on the sidewalk. We must be careful developing that consideration is given to parking and type of units so that we don't end up with more section 8.

Randall Kelly: Clear the sidewalks clean up Abbott Court Parking, consider parking garage.

Bee Shea at Oasis Salon - Snow removal is issue; street gets clean and plow leaves an edge. Tree lighting, love it, white lights on trees used to be pretty. Tree at Opera House is gone, would be nice to have town tree. Parking Lot signs are not optimally located. Parking signs need to be on both sides of the road.

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Scott Graves, plenty of parking, not optimally signed.

Terri: Does Rail Trail Signage adequate: No...we need better signs and bike racks. If we walk downtown with Public Works and Business Owners can we get some help from the business people? Yes. John will also help.

Neelima: Creative Chef's Kitchens, her issues are different. Spoke highly of town employees and assistance that town provides navigating through regulatory requirements. Food Business Incubator, commercial kitchen that enables small business to produce commercial product in small batches. Incubation side helps business from startup phase through all the steps to bring the foods to the retail/commercial marketplace. Wants to grow, considering larger location.

Randall: Consider a beat cop for downtown.

George: Parking and walkability of downtown critical. Also, town will be careful about types of apartments. Micro Apartments are ideal for downtown with culture and restaurants. People are willing to walk a couple of blocks, zoning and housing downtown go together and we will look at that.

Bea: people who live downtown support downtown.

Brian: as a downtown resident it is great that he can get on the bike path, and walk to businesses.

Downtown Lighting: Crosswalks need attention. People need a way to cross safely it is difficult right now.

Brian: Interactive Map of Downtown.

Steve: Public Works has been working with Public Safety, his observation is that street lighting is inadequate.

Craig & Chrissy: Stockbridge Theater partner with the businesses. Rail Trail, Carina, Andy interested.

Carina: Derry has changed in a good way and is coming to life. Big town with a small-town feel. Amazing the way this town is coming together.

Meeting Adjourned.

