Economic Development Advisory Committee

Minutes – November 21, 2016

Attendees: Terri Pastori, James Morgan, George Sioras, John Potucek, Christina Gossel, Craig Cunningham

Absent, Andrew White, Scott Graves, Gordon Graham; Nicholas Del'Etoile

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

I. Approve Minutes of the October 17, 2016 Meeting

II. Approve Minutes of the October 27, 2016 Workshop
Jim Morgan moved to approve both, John Potucek seconded, motion approved.

III. Chair's Report (Terri Pastori)

a. 21st Annual Meeting of the NH Division of Economic Development 12.1.16, John & Scott may attend, John will do re-cap at our next meeting

b. This is My Derry (http://www.thisismyderry.com) Polar Express Screenings December 17 - 2 Screenings, buy items at local business the week before the event, receipt = admissions.

c. Update on Economic Development Positions
Workshop with Town Council to refine our requirements. Dave Caron will start December 5, TC will have workshop with Buxton 12/20. Workshop 12/13 at 6:30 to finalize Buxton and set direction.

Dave Caron was present at out meeting tonight.

IV. Business Owners Forum: Next Steps

Jim- forum worked well. Encourage another forum with focused agenda on issues. Separate achievable goals. Lighting in Downtown is an issue. Committee should make recommendation to Council that sidewalks need to be cleared for winter. Terri will send minutes of 10/27 meeting to Council with list of recommendations in advance of Winter weather.

Terri, Business owners need to get to know who town officials are.

Opportunity for all of us to talk up the town, and get to know the town. A suggestion was made that EDAC Members check in on Facebook when we visit an establishment. It helps the business to know we were there, and helps to promote the business.

John - Randall mentioned that we should have a beat cop in Downtown. Can we have an officer occasionally park their cruiser downtown and walk around for a little bit? Might be a long-term objective given staffing challenges. Jim mentioned that as staffing issues are resolved this may change.

George suggested that we break down feedback into short term vs. long term goals. We should figure out quick fixes and get them done. We should also have a mechanism to track the longer-term goals.

Terri - we can go to Council with quick changes, snow removal, relationship building with business owners, walk through with business owners, parking signage. Make sidewalks attractive and lead people to alternative parking spots.

George stopped at Carina's the Friday after the meeting, she liked the meeting and encouraged an ongoing dialogue.

Terri will get on TC Agenda for December 6th with our recommendations.

V. Presentation by Laurel Bistany, Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire (http://www.redc.com)

REDC is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Their mission is job creation and retention. Alternative lending is one tool. Since 2010 they have managed Derry's revolving loan. Their clients include: Tupelo, Cask and Vine, and White Birch Vineyards.

In addition, they have a technical assistance program, business planning, Quick Books, social media, graphic design.

Path for clients is to get feet on the ground then grown by working with community banks. 3-5 years with REDC. Feeder system for commercial lenders.

NH is lean for economic development. Our size makes state officials more approachable. Small tax incentive benefits. R&D tax credits can be carried forward for five years. We don't have cash incentives like other states. Many NH business owners are interested in life style.

Laurel suggested that we think about visiting business owners as an ambassadorship. Economic Development is a long-term commitment, it takes engagement of the town employees and officials.

Town can do a better job of streamlining our relationship of all departments finding balance between needs of a department and need for economic growth. Reputation is important, town departments need to be recognized as easy to do business with.

Jim Morgan – provided clarification on the revolving loan fund. It is the town's money, we can recall the money, and the money is paid back into the town to enable the fund to continue to help business.

REDC does participation loans where they may provide a portion of the owner's equity share so that SBA or commercial lender can underwrite the balance.

The Revolving Loan Find puts Derry's surplus funds to work to help stimulate economic development in Derry. Jim believes that EDAC should go to Town Council to increase the revolving fund. This doesn't cost the taxpayers any additional money.

REDC lends to a wide range of businesses, they tend to target higher wage occupations. Derry revolving loan fund goes across all business types.

Incubators have not worked well; shared space has been very good. Small office space is in demand, particularly micro-offices.

A question was raised about what areas in town might be good for office space development? Downtown would be best suited. Very walkable, maybe one block back from Broadway. Keep people in the Downtown, potential for Abbot Court.

Need to replenish revolving loan fund. Other segments to consider earmarking funds for, consider an area of town for a grant/loan program, provide incentives for business improvements. Helps to demonstrate town's commitment to development.

How do we communicate economic development incentives? Some towns (Stratham, Hudson, Merrimack) have printed materials ready to go. Londonderry has great website. Being an ambassador and spreading the information organically is best long term approach.

Jim- develop a toolbox for business owners. Make the necessary information easily available. Our website is very municipal.

NH Department of Resources and Economic Development has been trying to build a toolbox for a very long time. Listed resources and links to them is great, challenge is maintenance when there is too much detail.

Information gathering should not be a treasure hunt.

Jim would like Laurel and Terri to present to Council in January.

Laurel suggested that the town put together a great video to highlight the opportunities in Derry.

VI. Team Reports

a. Survey -- Craig - send to Will Stewart (Chamber of Commerce and Eddie Leon at Rotary, Andy Day, Carina, Derry Public Library, and Taylor Library) Survey cut off = December 23rd. 198 Surveys submitted as of 11/21.

b. Communications & Marketing – Nick and Chrissy - met with Doug Rathburn, Derry's IT/GIS Director about getting a Derry Video on the town website and information about starting business in Derry, Doug recommended something like http://www.stamfordbusinessportal.org/ Virtual Town Hall costs about $2500 to develop a website. Nick and Chrissy will work with Town Manager to move this forward.

c. Land Use – Drew, George, and Jim Morgan - No Report
d. Retail, Food, & Hospitality Team - Craig, Chrissy, and Scott - Stockbridge partnership is starting, discount tickets for businesses to promote dinner and a show Broadway's Next Show January 27th.

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Minutes – November 21, 2016

e. Commercial & Industrial - Drew and Jim – no report
f. Downtown –Terri and John g. Events - Festival of trees is underway, looks great. Downtown is looking like Derry used to look. Tree in front of Municipal Center will be lit.

h. Business Assistance & Incentives – Nick and Scott – no report

VII. Updates

a. Property Maintenance Committee (Jim Morgan) – no update
b. Planning Board (George Sioras) – no update
c. Derry Net Zero Task Force (Nick del'etoile) -no update

VIII. Public Comments - None

IX. Future EDC Meetings - December 19th. Terri will look to have the January meeting on the 23rd. We could potentially go to Cable Studio.

b. Member Requests - None

Jim moved to Adjourn George second, motion carried.