

# Town of Derry, NH

To: Economic Development Advisory Committee  
From: Bev Donovan, Economic Development Director  
Date: February 1, 2022  
Re: EDAC - Staff Report

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The following update is offered for the Committee's review:

- a. EDAC Update:
  - i. In 2021, EDAC was reconstituted as an ad hoc committee, with representation on the Gateway TIF District and the Commerce Corridor TIF District committees.
  - ii. A Parking Committee was formed to study the downtown parking areas and to complete a report to the Town Council relative to current and future usage
  - iii. An Economic Development Summit with Town Council was held on April 27, 2021
  - iv. Economic Development Summit 2022 will take place in April 2022
  - v. A review of the current EDAC Bylaws will take place this month and updated strategy will be presented to Town Council.
  - vi. Advocacy remains and important role for EDAC. With the pandemic, there has been a gap in information, especially as it relates to the State Legislature. This will be a future focus.
- b. COVID-19 Pandemic: The COVID-19 Pandemic is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> wave, and we continue to work with businesses to help them stabilize. To date, we have not seen any permanent business closures that were solely attributed to COVID-19.
  - i. Temporary Expanded Outdoor Dining – 13 restaurants took part in 2021 – down from 20 participants in 2020. The Town Council has approved a permanent ordinance for outdoor 2021 dining going forward.
  - ii. Parklets – The businesses took advantage of parklets in 2021 – The Grind & Destination India. Going forward, parklets will need to meet the updated ordinance and design standards.
  - iii. The expanded Food Truck ordinance and the new Hawkers, Peddlers & Itinerant Vendor ordinance was approved in 2021 and will already need to be updated, based on unforeseen circumstances and potential changes to state law.
  - iv. The Greater Derry Arts Council received the Shuttered Venue Grant, as well as two smaller grants, to keep the organization afloat, as well as to make repairs and upgrades while the venue was “dark”.

We continue working with our SBA partners and all state agencies to constantly identify and share information for our business community.

Derry continues to enjoy a very low rate of default on commercial property leases. With the funding available in SBA products such as EIDL and PPP, as well as the State's GOFERR and Main Street Funding, many businesses are finding ways to keep their heads above water.

- c. Abbott Court: As an extension of the feasibility study by TF Moran, the Town began looking at potential development partners. After interviewing several, the Town signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Lansing Melbourne Group (LMG) to work on a Public/Private Partnership project that would incorporate parking, commercial/retail space, public gathering space, residential density, and educational facilities. The Town/LMG were successful in obtaining the 5 variances

needed to advance the project. Once the appeal process has passed, more in-depth design and financial structuring will commence.

- d. Downtown Façade Program: The program was renewed for FY21. Both Compare Ristorante and Cask & Vine were awarded grants.
- e. Real Estate & Development:
  - i. The Rehab Hospital on Ashleigh Drive was completed and opened
  - ii. North Point Outdoors project was completed and opened
  - iii. Paul The Plumber's building on Franklin St. is now complete
  - iv. Bangor Savings Bank - No further action has taken place
  - v. Exit 4-A is set to begin construction in the late summer of 2022, starting at Route 93, Londonderry. All tenants affected must vacate by August of 2022.
  - vi. Phase I on the Siragusa Redevelopment Plan on South Main Street for re-use of the existing home and lawn for events, including a Tent and Pavilion, has begun.
  - vii. Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) was approved for the GC Zone along Route 111 – AKA the Brooks properties.
  - viii. LaBelle Winery has acquired the former Brookstone Event Center; complete renovations to the existing structures have taken place, and a new vineyard and Wine Barn is in process of being completed.
  - ix. Planning Board sub-committees worked on zoning amendments with staff: a review of the sign ordinance and signage in the new West Running Brook District; the Downtown/Traditional Business Overlay District to expand the boundaries of the district and to review the housing density and parking requirements and: working with the Net Zero Committee on a Solar Ordinance.
  - x. There are several restaurants slated to open in 2022: Blue Mango at Hood Plaza, Los Reyes Street Tacos at South Side Plaza, and the updated Halligan's Tavern (potentially renamed). In addition, after 40 years, the owners of downtown's C&K Restaurant have retired, and new owner has recently renovated and reopened as Hare of the Dawg. DRAE was replaced by the new Destination India Restaurant. Smoothie bar Replenish and tea outlet Hometown Roots are also new to Derry. Finally, Rigatony's on West Broadway is on-track to re-open this spring.
  - xi. The GrindHouse and Backyard Brewing were approved for their project on Crystal Ave.
  - xii. Conceptual plans included: former Watts Junkyard mixed-use, Butterfield mixed-use, McCormack mixed-use. Several potential developments remain at the staff input level.
- f. Education, Visitation & Outreach:
  - i. Regional & State meetings have been a mix of in-person and virtual – re: Economy, Education, Non-Profits, but continue to move the town, region and state forward.
  - ii. We continue to share news, information and resources through email and social media outlets
- g. Communication/Marketing/Social Media:
  - i. Social media channels have drastically changed in recent months and continues to prove difficult to reach audiences with new algorithms.
  - ii. New research and trends have shown the importance of being hyper-local, as more people are working from home. The challenge is in competing for attention in a busy on-line space.
  - iii. We hope to hire an intern this spring to assist with a formal marketing strategy.
  - iv. It is a goal to re-engage EDAC in an advocacy role. With COVID-19 and a turnover of committee members over the past four years, there is work to be done here.

h. Public Art/Placemaking/Cultural:

- i. The Derry Aviation/Alan Shepard Mural was commissioned at the start of 2021, and after 9 months of work, was unveiled to much fanfare in September as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Alan Shepard's Apollo 14 Mission.
- ii. The Public Arts Committee held Downtown Derry Derby Day, painted and place two painted pianos (Broadway and Derry Public Library), facilitated the Aviation/Shepard Mural and planned the Creative Crosswalk mural to be installed this May.
- iii. The Hood Park Committee has made final recommendations and plans are underway to begin updating the park.
- iv. Opera House has been up and running, and planning for a major stage renovation over August/September.

i. Small Business Saturday:

- i. November 27<sup>th</sup> was Small Business Saturday – the parade was back, and downtown was the busiest that organizers have seen in previous years (despite the wind and frigid weather). The day was expanded to include live music throughout the day, a pop-up shop and the Red Ticket Raffle, which helped drive traffic into local shops and restaurants.

j. Opportunity Zones: Two properties have recently turned over – the former C&K Restaurant and 6 West Broadway. Investors were aware of the OZ status for both. Currently, Jake D's is under contract, and is also in the OZ.

k. Next Meeting: TBD

l. Respectfully Submitted: Beverly Donovan