

**Town of Northwood  
Planning Board  
March 14, 2013**

Chairman Robert Strobel calls the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Strobel, Selectmen's Representative Scott Bryer, Joseph McCaffrey, Alternate Victoria Parmele, Town Planner Elaine Planchet, and Board Administrator Linda Smith. *Babette Morrill arrives at 6:40 p.m.; Rick Wolf and Adam Sprague arrive at 6:45 p.m.; Vice-Chairman Tim Jandebour arrives at 7:00 p.m.*

**VOTING DESIGNATION:** Bob Strobel, Scott Bryer, Joe McCaffrey, and Alternate Victoria Parmele. Babette Morrill - 6:40 p.m.; Rick Wolf and Adam Sprague at 6:45 p.m. Tim Jandebour at 7:00 p.m. and Alternate Mr. Sprague is then removed from the voting designation.

**MINUTES**

**February 28, 2013**

**Mr. McCaffrey makes a motion, second by Mr. Bryer, to approve the minutes of February 28, 2013, as written. Motion passes; 4/0.**

**OTHER**

***Change in Town Planner Schedule***

Ms. Planchet explains her new hours. She states she will now be in the office two days per week, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 8:30-1:30. She states that, in addition, she has been requested to attend the economic development committee meetings; therefore, some of her responsibilities may need to shift to accommodate the economic development duties.

*Babette Morrill arrives at 6:40 p.m. and is added to voting designation.*

**Master Plan Update Discussion**

***Public Input/Discussion on Economic Development, Income & Employment***

Ms. Planchet provides an overview of the evening's topic. Ms. Planchet states that the planning board is a land use board and the role of the board pertains to the use of the land. She further explains the regulations for the planning board and the board's authority noting how the zoning ordinance is developed and adopted; as well as the site plan and subdivision regulations are adopted at the planning board level.

Ms. Planchet explains the handout provided which includes a "Community Profile" and median income and housing composition tables, which include 2010 Census information as well as Community Survey results.

*6:45 p.m. Rick Wolf and Alternate Adam Sprague arrive and are added to the voting designation.*

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Ms. Planchet refers to Table 6, which shows housing compositions: units and occupancy rates. She states that this shows 75% occupied, which is a much lower number than the surrounding towns. Discussion ensues as to whether this information includes summer homes/camps.

Ms. Planchet explains that the planning board is currently working on an update to the 2004 Master Plan, which was the last Master Plan Update. She states that at that time, there was a period of growth in Northwood. She states that the regulations should follow the Master Plan, which is a guide.

Ms. Planchet explains that this evening's work session is time the board set aside for the public to express comments and concerns about economic development in Northwood and for the planning board to listen to what the public would like to see in Northwood relative to economic development, income and housing as part of the master plan update. She states that the planning board will be including a visioning statement in the update of the master plan and she refers to a tri-fold poster for folks to place stickers to identify goals which are important to them.

Members of the board introduce themselves. Members of the public present are Kevin Campbell from Harding Metals, Lucy Edwards, Judy Burke from the Economic Development Committee (EDC), and David Tousignant, EDC Chair.

*Tim Jandebour arrives at 7 p.m.*

Mr. Bryer asks Mr. Tousignant to speak first as he is chair of the Economic Development Committee (EDC).

Mr. Tousignant states that in 2010 the EDC adopted goals and provides a spreadsheet which is displayed on the projector. He explains to the board the goals and activities of the EDC since 2010 and highlights areas of importance to the committee. He states that a high priority item for the committee has been to have a more interactive and updated town website. He states that the EDC has been trying to get a website and have met with the selectmen about this and have even offered to return their budget back to the town in trade for the expert time to get the website going. Discussion ensues.

Mr. Tousignant states that the EDC has been proactive in trying to promote the committee and have attempted many different things, approached different avenues and events; however, there has been a lack of volunteerism and an overall lack of interest. He refers to the business directory which was a success; yet there is only a spreadsheet available on the website. He states that the website is a major tool and the EDC would like to have a website promoted on the town's website.

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Mr. Tousignant states that he believes that the operation and upkeep of a website should be a paid position of the town. He adds that there has been a lot of turnover on the EDC.

Mr. Jandebour states that the town needs to consider Information Technology (IT) as a priority; both the town and the school websites are poor, and there needs to be funding for websites. He states that the town cannot continue to rely on the volunteers to upgrade the websites for free. Discussion ensues. Mr. Tousignant states that he feels that website updates need to be prioritized. He suggests planning to budget funds for year 2014. Mr. Jandebour states that there are people available in town that could help or assist with website upgrades and it is up to the selectmen to address the matter.

Mr. Tousignant explains that the EDC's Business After Hours program has slowed down. He explains that networking on the local level was the reason most people attended. He states that the event was a quarterly meeting and the committee is now considering changing this to a semi-annual or annual meeting.

Mr. Tousignant states that the committee spent some time looking into state programs and the possible designation of Rt. 4 as a business zone. He explains that the application process fell apart and at this time no one has come forward to begin the process again.

Mr. Tousignant states that the EDC needs to continue to find out what the local business' interests are. He states it is a moving target and the EDC would like to offer assistance. Mr. Tousignant suggests offering technical seminars on different topics of interest. Mr. Tousignant states that their Business After Hours at the Farmers Market was successful.

Mr. Tousignant states that the EDC would like to work together with the planning board to better understand the processes that new businesses must go through. He adds that applications have been revised relative to various types of businesses. Mr. Tousignant states that the biggest complaint from local business owners has been the bathroom requirements. Further discussion ensues regarding the requirements for bathrooms and the possibility of removing the law through a new bill. Ms. Parmele asks about alternative to septic systems and toilets and suggests composting toilets. Ms. Burke states that she has spoken with the ADA committee chair and he does not like the idea of portable toilets. She states that there are some design ideas that can be done to accommodate the handicap. She states that, in speaking with the state Building Code Review Board, she found out there is really nothing the town can do about the requirements as the codes have been adopted by the state.

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Mr. Tousignant states that the committee has considered a possible tax relief program to assist new businesses with startup costs driven by the town, the state, and federal government. Mr. Tousignant states that the EDC believes that a slogan needs to be developed in order to promote the area and the businesses. He states that the EDC would like to raise awareness of the area lakes and parks in town; why it is good to live and work in Northwood; essentially marketing the town. He notes that there are many properties for sale in the town and that has a negative effect on the town. He adds that there should be some listing made available to advertise and promote these properties. Ms. Burke suggests the concept of a business incubator to create business startups.

Mr. Tousignant states that the EDC feels that they need to be in contact with neighboring towns for feedback as to their successes and failures. Mr. Strobel suggests contacting other communities to see what services that they come to Northwood for, such as Hannaford, the banks, etc. Ms. Planchet provides a handout of the planning board's survey showing the results of what people are looking for, for businesses in Northwood. Discussion ensues.

Mr. Jandebour notes that he has been made aware of a program regarding a small "Walmart" type store that is on a much smaller scale. He states that this smaller scale store may be a better fit for Northwood rather than a big box store.

Ms. Edwards mentions income and hopes that the businesses that come into town would bring jobs allowing people to earn a wage and live in town. Ms. Burke states that the EDC has discussed an industrial type zone. Mr. Bryer states that the town lacks the infrastructure and that makes it difficult to bring in larger businesses. Discussion ensues as to professional office spaces and promoting these options in this community. Mr. Tousignant states that the list of businesses in town needs to be kept updated.

Mr. Jandebour states that there is an updated local map. He states that members of the EDC felt a little hurt that the committee was not included in the development of the map and able to provide input. Mr. Tousignant states that this is a good example; the EDC needs to be contacted by someone in the town; a central person in town hall. Ms. Smith explains that there was interaction with town staff by the private organization that created the maps. She explains the possibility of how the businesses were contacted to create the maps. Discussion ensues regarding the maps.

Mr. Campbell states that he is interested in listening this evening and that he will bring the topics of discussion and information from this meeting back to his company.

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**Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats**

Ms. Planchet leads the board and members of the public in the discussion. She states that she has been recording comments into these categories as mentioned so far. Discussions ensues.

**Strengths:** natural resources/recreational draw & opportunities; hiking; mountain biking; water; road access (Rt 4, etc); excellent high school, grocery store w/ pharmacy; good base of services compared to surrounding towns, central proximity (1/2 hr to everything); traffic flow; commute; park & ride; snowmobile state corridor trail; Mixed use/commercial & residential allowed; economic development committee; town planner

**Weakness:** town website; no public sewerage; only public water at the ridge; large tracts of land?; tax level; same 30 minutes away from everything; no bus service; a lot of Visible properties for sale (most along Rt 4;doesn't look good); very poor offerings of overnight accommodations available; multiple accesses on Route 4/safety; access points; infrastructure

**Opportunities:** restaurant other than pizza; there are a lot of properties available w/ high exposure on our main traffic route linking Concord to the Seacoast...High Traffic Count on Route 4; Economic Development willing to work with folks; office space available

**Threats:** turning left on Route 4; degradation of the lakes; water quality < milfoil, etc. drops property value; current lingering state of the economy...

Mr. Strobel thanks everyone for attending and states that the feedback received was helpful.

A discussion is held regarding the surrounding town's old home days and the planning for Northwood's Bean Hole Bash. Ms. Edwards states that this type of event is important to the community and distributes publicity cards with the date and information on the July 26-27 event.

Further discussion ensues regarding the town's website and updates.

**Mr. Bryer makes a motion, second by Mr. McCaffrey, to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Motion passes unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted

Lisa Fellows-Weaver  
Board Secretary

*Official as of March 28, 2013*