EDC Meeting Minutes - 5/5/10

Contributed by David Stack
Monday, 14 June 2010

Northwood Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2010
7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order and attendance

Chair Kristen Kiernan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Kristen Kiernan, Chair; David Tousignant, Vice-chair; Kevin Ash;
Herb Johnson; Hal Kreider; Ken Rick; Babette Morrill; and Town Administrator David Stack and Selectman Scott Bryer.

Absent: Judy Burke

II. Public Comment - none

III. Meetings

Ricia Velasco - Business Resource Center
NH Department of Resources and Economic Development

David Stack introduced Ms. Velasco. He reported that he had seen her speak at a recent meeting on economic development that he had attended.

Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) Program
Ms. Velasco discussed the NH Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program with the Committee. The ERZ designation is awarded to communities by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). This designation allows businesses that locate in the ERZ, and meet certain criteria, to claim tax credits against New Hampshire’s business taxes. Hal Kreider asked if there were other towns that have designated ERZ zones. Ms. Velasco said that may towns and cities have, including; Manchester, Goffstown, Pittsfield, Antrim, Hudson and Nashua. The Committee had other questions about the program and the process and discussed the possibility of Northwood creating an ERZ zone.

Master Plan
Ms. Velasco discussed the importance of economic development and having a plan for commercial growth in the Town’s Master Plan. The Committee told her that an offer has been extended to the Planning Board to assist with that section of the Plan when it is updated or re-written.

Tourism
Ms. Velasco observed that tourism plays an important role in Northwood’s economic well-being. She recommended that the Committee work with the tourism driven businesses in the Town, along with the other businesses benefitting from the tourism.
Kristen Kiernan also mentioned the draw of “Antique Alley”. Ms. Velasco gave the name of a person from the State, Laurel Ford, to speak to about potential funds available through Tourism Joint Promotional Program (JPP) Grants.

Realtors and commercial properties
Ms. Velasco recommends that the Committee designate a point person to work with the realtors and property owners, particularly those selling properties for commercial development.

Ms. Velasco also gave the Board other ideas, including: contacting MicroCredit to conduct an informational session for small businesses; energy audit grant funding for businesses; broadband and utility expansion; use of surveys; grant funds for website development and upgrades; planning grants; and the availability regional planning commission assistance.

Kristen Kiernan thanked Ms. Velasco for meeting with the Committee

IV. Unfinished Business

1. Committee Goals

Hal Kreider said that Committee has several ideas and projects that have been started and many ideas for other projects. He recommends that the Committee focus on the list of goals that was voted on last week for the most part and add a few more items from tonight’s discussion with Ricia Velasco.

Two items that were discussed further at this point were the Master Plan re-write and the potential creation of commercial areas in the zoning ordinance.

Action: Babette Morrill and Hal Kreider volunteered to contact the Planning Board Chair, Bob Strobel, and set up a time to meet with him to discuss the Master Plan. Kristen Kiernan volunteered to contact the Board of Selectmen and meet with the Board on 5/25/10 to discuss ERZ zones.

2. Committee publicity report

Kevin Ash handed out a proposed press release on the recent Business After Hours program and the program planned for 6/23/10. He asked the Committee to review the release and contact him with any suggested changes, additions, etc.

3. Proposed Planning Board Minimal Impact Review Process

Herb Johnson reported that he had not yet been able to raise this matter with the Planning Board. Babette Morill and Hal Kreider will discuss this topic with the Planning Board Chair when they meet with him

4. Committee operating procedures and code of conduct

Hal Kreider reported that he and Babette Morill had not had a chance to meet to develop a draft for the Committee. They will do so for the next meeting on 6/2/10.

5. Memorial Day

Ken Rick reported that the Committee had received permission form the VFW to participate in the Memorial Day observance. He and Hal Kreider will carry the Committee banner in the procession and the other members of the Committee are welcome to participate.

V. New Business

1. Acceptance of minutes from 4/7/10 meeting

Dave Tousignant moved to accept the minutes of 4/7/10. Kevin Ash seconded. Motion passed.

2. CDBG Economic Development Grant proposal

David Stack reported that Laurel Bistany, Executive Director of the Rockingham Economic Development Corporation, will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen on 5/1/10 to discuss a proposed CDBG Economic Development Grant that will provide funds to the REDC to then lend to a business in the community. David Stack will keep the Committee informed on the status of the proposal.

3. Business After Hours status report

David Stack reported that he had contacted Lake Shore Farm to host the next program on Wednesday, June 23. Dave Tousignant will follow up with Harry Ring to discuss more details.

The Committee discussed the location for the September After Hours program. Judy Burke had reported in an e-mail that MD Tasker would like to host the event.

Action: Dave Tousignant moved to hold the September Business After Hours at MD Tasker. Herb Johnson seconded. Motion passed

4. New and expanded business news

Rhoda Sommer is considering opening a fitness business in the current Curves location on First NH Turnpike, next to Northwood House of Pizza.

VI. Adjournment

Action: Herb Johnson moved to adjourn. Hal Kreider seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.