

Wolfeboro Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 8 a.m.

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes – Draft

Members present: Chair Kathy Eaton, Denise Roy-Palmer, Dr. Craig Gemmell, Mike Roush, Alan Harding, Mary DeVries (alternate), Steve Durgan, Lisa Lutts, Steve Johnson and Board of Selectman/EDC Liaison Alternate Linda Murray

Members/staff absent: Board of Selectmen/EDC Liaison Dave Bowers, Jeff McGuinness, Cindy Patten

Staff present: Town Manager Dave Owen, Director of Planning & Development Matt Sullivan, Recording Secretary Larissa Mulkern

1. **Call to Order & Introductions:** Chair Eaton called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Mr. Sullivan was introduced to members; he provided some background on his career with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission and work with housing planning, Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, GIS mapping and economic development.
2. **Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes of the November 15 meeting as amended [to add reference to the consensus to hold the December meeting to the 13th] was made by Dr. Gemmell, seconded by Mr. Roush. Members voted and the motion passed. Members abstaining from the vote, who were not at the November meeting, were Denise Roy-Palmer, Mary DeVries and Lisa Lutts.**
3. **New Business:**
 - a. **Business Updates:** Jackie's Boutique was moving into the Preferred Rentals site. Mr. Harding asked the status of the Woodbine facility [a care facility for elderly residents with dementia]. Progress is stalled due to an insufficient water supply. Mr. Harding stressed the need to extend the town's water and sewer service out to Route 109. Mr. Owen added it was a subject for discussion on the Town's Master Plan and with the Planning Board. Mrs. Eaton said, in addition, the vineyard project property closing at the 1810 Barn on Route 28 has been pushed to January; she added any kind of substantive growth would be dependent upon expansion of the water and sewer lines. Ms. Lutts said the new NH Boat Museum would require water access as well when the former dance hall is renovated for boat building space. Mr. Harding suggested setting a deadline for water and sewer system expansion. Currently, the Town water lines extend 400 feet beyond Whitten Neck Road, added Mr. Owen.
 - b. **Proposed Flyers about Town Website to be sent with Electric Bills:** Mr. Owen said the Communications Committee came up with this idea to promote the use of the Town's new website and to promote awareness. The flyer will cost about \$500 to send out with the electric bills, which will come out of the EDC budget. Mrs. Eaton said the Group Advertising Committee also reviewed the flyer and came up with the following suggestions: To add in the lower right hand corner of the flyers: 'To list your Wolfeboro Business: Go to 'Businesses' and fill out the 'Business Account Request Form,' and 'to add your community link,' and 'to list your community event.' Discussion ensued

regarding the type of communications that can be distributed via municipal bill mailings. Dr. Gemmell suggested a helpline for folks who have trouble navigating the website. Mr. Owen added that community links can be added as well and that the site already includes most of the town's organizations. Once an entity is registered as a business on the website, it can make changes and include a logo on the listing. However, thus far, the site has no listings for restaurants.

Motion: Ms. DeVries made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to authorize the expenditure of \$500 from the EDC budget to send the informative flyers about the town's website with the electric bills in January. Members voted and the motion passed.

Mrs. Eaton added that the website is about improving communications between the town, businesses and the community. Mr. Owen added that separate calendars come up on the website: public meetings, Great Hall, and community events.

- c. **Upcoming public hearing on applications by Pickering House owners for real estate tax incentive:** Mrs. Owen said the town now has its first application under New Hampshire RSA 79-E, from Peter and Patty Cooke, the new owners of the Pickering House. They intend to invest \$1.2 million to restore the building and convert it into a [10-room] inn. Tax incentives for renovating historic properties in a downtown area are available through this law, which the Town adopted for local use. The public hearing on the Cooke's application will be held before the Board of Selectmen on January 4, 2017 at 6:35 p.m. The board, added Mr. Owen, will have to make a finding that the project is of public benefit and if so, the building will be assessed for real estate tax purposes at the current level for five years, which provides the owners a window to recoup some of their investment. Members were encouraged to attend the public hearing on January 4. Mr. Sullivan added that the town will have a restrictive covenant as part of the requirements of NH RSA 79-E.

Motion: Ms. DeVries made a motion to authorize EDC Chair Kathy Eaton to speak on behalf of the Cooke's Pickering House application to the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Ms. Roy-Palmer, voted on and passed. Mrs. Murray abstained from the vote.

- d. **Inviting Rusty McLearn from Meredith to the January meeting:** Mrs. Eaton discussed inviting Mr. McLean, [co-owner and president of the Mill Falls inns in Meredith] to the EDC meeting in January to discuss hotel development in Wolfeboro. Mr. Harding said he met with Mr. McLearn last year when they discussed successful ventures in Meredith. Mrs. Eaton added that Mill Falls was built at the site of an old asbestos mill. She would like to know what the EDC could do to assist an entrepreneur coming in to town to help the town stabilize its year round economic vitality and viability. Dr. Gemmell offered to create a framework for the discussion with Mr. McLearn (strengths, weaknesses. Mr. Harding will create a draft and send it to Dr. Gemmell with an eye on inviting Mr. McLearn to the February meeting instead of the January meeting. Mr. Durgan added that an entity's desire to risk capital to extend water and sewer, perhaps, could be a part of the overall discussion to entrepreneurs. Mrs. Roy-Palmer suggested holding the EDC meeting with Mr. McLearn at the Great Hall, and to invite interested parties.

4. Old Business

a. Planning Board’s recommendations regarding hotels: Mrs. Eaton said the Planning Board decided not to take action to withdraw the 50-room limit for hotels from the zoning ordinance as the board wants to develop proper architectural standards. Mr. Sullivan noted that the option to submit a petition article would have to be filed in two days. Members expressed disappointment with the Planning Board’s inaction on the room limit ordinance. Planning Board Chair Kathy Barnard, who was visiting the Town Hall Annex just then, was invited to join the EDC meeting. Mrs. Barnard said she understood why EDC members were upset, and she, too, was surprised as when the Planning Board met in a joint meeting with the EDC, members supported removing the 50-room limit out of the existing ordinance. She said the Planning Board had started working on architectural standards when Mr. Houseman was still with the Town, and had created a draft; however after the EDC joint meeting, the Planning Board members seemed to want smaller hotels that fit in better with the character of the town. She said the Planning Board didn’t take a vote, but rather decided not to take action this year (2017) on the hotel room limit. The idea is not off the table, just delayed to 2018. Presently, inns and hotels are allowed downtown and in the Bay Street and Wolfeboro Falls area are allowed by special exception requiring a site plan review.

Discussion ensued and members expressed disappointment and discussed potential action/reaction. Mrs. Barnard said the Planning Board public hearing on the zoning amendments was set for Dec. 20 and invited members to attend.

Motion: Mrs. Roy-Palmer made a motion seconded by Mr. Harding for the EDC to write to the Planning Board expressing great disappointment at the lack of communication over this change of direction. Members voted all in favor and the motion passed.

- 5. Other Business:** EDC meeting schedule for next year: the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 17th at 8 a.m. at the Great Hall.
- 6. Town Manager/Selectmen’s Representative Report:** Mr. Owen is working on wrapping up the budget and that the Town’s warrant articles that have been sent to the Budget Committee. Major warrant articles include Center Street reconstruction, Mast Landing parking lot, boat ramp at Dockside, and the Foss Field replacement building. The closing on the Freight House was scheduled to take place this week. Mrs. Murray said the Special Events Committee was putting together a flyer for activities during Last Night in Wolfeboro on December 31.
- 7. Adjournment:** A motion was made by Mrs. Murray and seconded by Mrs. Roy-Palmer to adjourn at 9:43 a.m.

The next meeting of the EDC will be held on January 17 at 8 a.m. at the Great Hall.

Respectfully submitted:
Larissa Mulkern, Recording Secretary