

Wolfeboro Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, May 16, 2017, 8 a.m.
Wolfeboro Town Hall - Great Hall
Meeting Minutes – [Draft](#)

Members present: Kathy Eaton, Jim O'Donnell, Dr. Craig Gemmell, BOS Liaison alternate Linda Murray, Peter Cooke, BOS Liaison Dave Bowers, Steve Durgan, Denise Roy-Palmer, Mike Roush

Members or alternates absent: Mary DeVries, Cindy Patten, Alan Harding, Lisa Lutts

Staff present: Town Manager Dave Owen, Director of Planning & Development Matt Sullivan, Keith Simpson, new IT person for Town of Wolfeboro, recording secretary Larissa Mulkern

Guests: Alana Albee, director of the Libby Museum, and John Simms, advocate for Lakes Region Model Railroad Museum project

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Eaton called the meeting to order shortly after 8 a.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the April 18 regular EDC meeting were approved as corrected.
3. **New Business**
 - a. **Resignation of Larissa Mulkern as recording secretary:** Mrs. Eaton announced that Amy Muccio has agreed to take over recording for the EDC meetings. Members thanked Larissa for her service.
 - b. **Introduction of Town's new Information Technology (IT) Assistant:** newly hired IT Assistant Keith Simpson was introduced. Mr. Simpson has an extensive computer background; he will work 10 hours a week to include updates to the Town of Wolfeboro website. He will work with the EDC on the Business Directory on the town website. Mr. Owen provided copies of what's included in the online directory.
 - c. **Proposed Expansion of Libby Museum:** Mrs. Murray presented the highlights of a presentation from Mr. Harding, who could not attend the meeting. The proposal is for a museum expansion; the plan was brought about by a generous donor who wants to donate 200 exhibits of American mammals. A handout with photos of the exhibits was distributed. Mrs. Murray said the first phase of the plan would include a feasibility study, with private funders paying for one-third of the study and a foundation paying a portion. Mr. Harding presented the plan to the Friends of the Libby Museum. The study will cost an estimated \$75,000. It would explore whether the expansion is realistic. Mr. Harding wrote in the proposal that this expansion would add to the notion of Wolfeboro as a

'museum town.' The town is ranked third in the state for its number of museums. It would attract more visitors before and after the summer. Becoming known as a museum destination could enhance the town's economic base. Mrs. Murray said Mr. Harding and the museum are looking for the EDC's support before presenting to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Eaton said the Group Advertising committee has identified that the town as a community of museums can be a part of what moves the town forward. Museums will have to be open beyond the summer. Mr. Bowers supported the museum town concept; the Historical Society could play a role; currently, the Historical Society does not have a lot of active programs. Several other members expressed support for promoting the town as a museum destination. Options to potential expansion locations were briefly discussed – details would be explored in a feasibility study. Ms. Albee said she was enthusiastic about the potential for expansion, but she is new to the museum. She discussed issues with the existing buildings and footprint that would have to be addressed. She noted the Friends of the Libby are still active and fundraise for the events that take place there, primarily those oriented to children. Mr. Owen noted the Town has been working with an architect and others to make repairs to the building and roof; some work has been done to reconnect the tie systems as the building was pulling apart. The building is back in good structural form but still has problems with ventilation and moisture control – it is an unheated building. There is a study with recommendations on building improvements. Ms. Albee invited members to visit the museum, and encouraged the committee to be engaged in the process of determining and defining feasibility.

Motion: Mrs. Eaton suggested a motion for the EDC to support a feasibility study to further consider the merits of a Libby Museum expansion. Dr. Gemmell moved the motion, seconded by Mrs. Roy-Palmer. Discussion ensued. Members voted all in favor of the motion and it passed.

Public comment: Mr. Simms updated the committee on the Freight House renovation project. He has applied for a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant, which requires the need to show that the creation of the museum has economic benefit to the town. He asked members for ideas on how the project can benefit the town. Ideas included that it utilizes an underutilized building; would create some jobs during construction and renovation; preserve a building with historic value; and become a draw for railroad fans.

Motion: Mrs. Murray suggested a motion that the EDC support and promote the concept of Wolfeboro as a museum town destination. Mr. Durgan seconded the motion; members voted all in favor the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bowers noted the he had a meeting with the owner of the Majestic Theatre in Conway who has plans to renovate the theatre as a music school and performance venue.

4. Old Business

- a. **Group Advertising Committee:** Mrs. Eaton distributed documents related to the group/co-op advertising campaign including a news release, letter to businesses, and co-op insert. She requested \$100 to mail out the co-op advertising campaign letters and return envelope. The letter requests \$100 from each recipient for a year-round promotion of Wolfeboro.

Motion: A motion was moved by Mr. Roush and seconded by Mr. Durgan to approve the expenditure of \$100 for the mailing. Members voted all in favor and it passed unanimously. Mr. Durgan will take a copy of the packed to the Wolfeboro Chamber and make a presentation.

- b. **Marketing Committee:** Mrs. Eaton distributed a smaller version of an ad that will run full page in *The Hippo*, which is distributed mostly in Southern New Hampshire. The Hippo will provide a full-page ad space for the price of one-quarter of a page.
- c. **Lodging Forum follow up:** Mrs. Eaton said the forum went very well with a wonderful turnout. Mr. Sullivan added that the discussion ranged in topics from zoning to the labor force to housing; since the forum he has received input from those who were unable to attend. He said this group should take a look at the town's labor force issues, a huge problem that requires consideration. There is interest in continuing roundtable discussion to assure that issues get addressed. He noted the potential of holding a second forum in the fall. Discussion ensued related to the content and comments shared at the Lodging Forum. Mr. Durgan suggested holding a job fair in town. Ms. Roush said the school hosts one in February.

- 5. **Town Manager/Selectmen's Representative Report:** Mr. Owen said the town has been working on a plan, with engineer Jim Rines, to expand the town docks. He shared a blueprint of the expansion that indicated the dock extensions from 140 feet to 200 feet. There will be a need for some dredging to accommodate the M/S Mount Washington. The NH Department of Environmental Services provided tentative approval of the plan. The Town Docks Committee will come before the Board of Selectmen soon to request the Town host a public hearing on the proposal in the summer. Mr. Durgan asked that this topic be placed on the EDC meeting agenda in June.

At Mrs. Roy-Palmer's suggestion, the committee will be polled regarding an earlier starting time for EDC meetings, which have been running well over an hour.

6. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, vote on and passed at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Larissa Mulkern
Recording Secretary

•Note: There will be no EDC meeting in July. •