

Posted 4/26/2017

**Town of Hooksett
Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Date: 04/19/2017

**Town of Hooksett Municipal Building,
35 Main Street, Hooksett, NH, Council Chambers, 1st Floor**

Time: 4:30 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT: 4:52 Meeting started late due to proper amount of member attendance required for a quorum.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

**PRESENT: David Scarpetti Chair, Matt Barrett Business Member, Ivan Gult Resident, Alden Beauzheimin Business Member, Marc Miville (Town Council).
STAFF: JoAnn Duffy (Town Planner), Kathy Lawrence (Minute Taker)**

ALTERNATES: N/A

EXCUSED: Paul Scarpetti Vice Chair (Planning Board), Dan Lagueux Member

Minutes to approve from: March 15, 2017

New Business:

UNH Cooperative Extension-Marissa Day-Follow up

Marissa Day: *The Business Retention and Expansion Program coordinator worked with Hooksett 1 year ago. We help the EDC put together an Economic Development Strategy Program.*

So we are back a year later to gather your feedback on the program. Did it fit well with your community and what worked best or least well for you? Focusing on all the coordination of the different parts of the program,

How do you feel about the Leadership Team and how effective that was?

David Scarpetti: *I think we had problems getting volunteers, and getting them to show up. We had hoped for more then what we had. People didn't seem to want to get involved.*

Marissa Day: *Do you think the training was adequate?*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Interviews were hard to establish. The business owners did not want to get involved.*

Marissa Day: *Was it more of a time constraint or they just didn't see the value in the interviews?*

Jo Ann Duffy: *We tried sending packets in the mail multiple times we followed up with phone calls and emails. They said they just did not have time. We had 34 participants out of 114.*

Marissa Day: *Do you think the value of the program was not communicated? That they did not understand the information we were trying to gather.*

David Scarpetti: *It was a long program too. A lot of the Businesses did not want to get involved.*

Marissa Day: *Did the leadership team and the task force blend together?*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Yes, everyone blended together and worked as a team.*

Marissa Day: *What were your expectations for UNH Cooperative Extension? Do you think that was met in delivering the Program?*

David Scarpetti: *Most of your suggestions were what the residents already wanted to see the town do anyway. Several of the items we have already worked on. The town web site has been improved. A TIF on 3A is getting started for infrastructure on that side of the river.*

Matt Barrett: *I did not have any expectations, but as a business owner if I get a survey like this, I am going to set it aside. You could cut it down and give more precise information without asking so many questions because it was just so big.*

Marissa Day: *Our team has realized that too. When you first started the program were you looking at having more data or were you looking to integrate the business and local community more?*

Marc Miville: *I like sitting down with the businesses and talking with them, let's set aside the survey and just chat for half hour. I got more out of that and I would like to do that more. Instead of sitting down 1 time with 50 questions I would rather go 5 times with 10 questions.*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Similar to the Ambassador Program.*

Matt Barrett: *Maybe you do it over a year on a quarterly basis that you take 10 questions and tabulate those.*

Marc Miville: *To answer your question, my conclusion that I reached is that every town is different. You can't have a firm document that you use for every town. You can't have the same 50 questions for every town. The result that I heard loud and clear is that the businesses are just fine without getting these surveys. We have had a history of bad experiences with the Planning Board and the difficulty of trying to get their businesses in town. We were perceived as not business friendly here. We have changed that around the last few years, as a better Planning Board and maybe some of those businesses still have a bad taste in their mouth and we approach them with a 50 question survey. Maybe that is why they didn't want to participate.*

Marissa Day: *For Hooksett, do you think that was the driving factor as to why you didn't get more participation.*

David Scarpetti: *It turned into a longer survey then anticipated instead of a 45 – 50 mins interview it was closer to 2 hours. They wanted to express some of their experiences too.*

Marc Miville: *We have had a lot of surveys in town and I think the most important part of the survey is the follow up. What are we going to do with the information we gathered?*

Matt Barrett: *I am saying the same thing, enough with the surveys. Let's do something with it.*

Marissa Day: *The businesses that did participate, do you think the relationship building did progress?*

Marc Miville: *I agree with what Matt is saying. If an owner is giving you feedback about something he would like to see done in town, sooner rather than later we should accomplish that.*

Matt Barrett: *Did any of the business have positive feedback?*

Marissa Day: *You don't have to have positive feedback. It's important to get the honest feedback. The intent of the Red Flag issues was the conversation with the business and the ability to act on issues they communicated.*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Surprisingly the Red Flag issues were more associated with the individual businesses, the size of their building, their lot size was too small, items that were not something for the town, and it was good news that they wanted to expand.*

Marissa Day: *The projects that were recommended did that start any planning?*

David Scarpetti: *Yes, the web site is continuing to improve with more positive information. We are looking into expanding water and sewer to 3A. Both projects have been talked about for a long time.*

Marc Miville: *I think we need more synergy in town. Businesses next to each other that can coexist.*

Matt Barrett: *Our logistics are difficult. We are divided by a river, both sides are very different.*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Another suggestion from businesses was for more community events close to where their businesses were located to bring the public in. Hinting they would like the community organizations and the town to get involved and hold more events.*

Matt Barrett: *The problem with Hooksett's layout is that we have no community center.*

Marc Miville: *Right here is the center of town. Main Street is the center of town. Every citizen comes here to pay their taxes and their car registrations. Ball fields are here, Old Home day is held here, this is where we come.*

Marissa Day: *I want to know why you chose to participate in the program.*

Matt Barrett: *I want to make Hooksett better; I want to see it continue growing and keep my business growing.*

David Scarpetti: *That is what we all want. That is the reason we are on this committee.*

Marissa Day: *Were you hoping that UNH and this program would help you put that into a strategy?*

Matt Barrett: *For years we have heard that Hooksett has the same businesses and we would like to see more diversity in future businesses. We could use more commercial office space on route 3.*

Marc Miville: *The survey outline that most of the adults in town don't work in Hooksett. They travel outside of town.*

Jo Ann Duffy: *12% live and work in Hooksett*

Marc Miville: *I don't know what the average is but that seems low.*

Dean Shankle: *I was the one who first reached out to UNH Cooperative Extension, because when I first started here 5 years ago there were a lot of complaints about having a business here. We had a meeting to talk about what we could do. We started by making a lot of changes in Planning and Zoning, we literally took down walls between those offices. We brought in a town Engineer. We had the same 3 or 4 people consistently complain. So what I wanted to see, through a bigger sample, was something more statistically balanced. We didn't get nearly as big a sample as we wanted but, even the things people complained about, from what I have seen from the results were not things I was expecting. It was not so much about the staff or systemic problems; it was more about over all Hooksett. I think that is important moving forward for how we address the issues. From my perspective I didn't see some of the things I wanted to see but*

that's good. Now we need to figure out what we have and move forward from where we are at. I am pleased with the outcome. I just wish there had been more people involved. Maybe the fact that they were not involved, may be a good thing. Did they not get involved because they were afraid of us or did they not have anything they wanted to say? It is a mind set in government that if the people don't come out and vote they must like what we are doing. If they don't then they will come out and vote against us. If they wanted to complain they would have but very few complained. We can't guess what they meant by not wanting to participate. I know you felt there were a lot of question that were unnecessary, but if you are going to do a survey and you're going to compare results, which is what UNH is trying to do then you need to use the same questions and they need those answers to get consistently balanced results.

Jo Ann Duffy: *A positive statistic is that 79% of the businesses in town are locally owned.*

David Scarpetti: *We had heard that other towns had more interaction with the survey and that lots of people participated. So we were excited to think we may have that too, but that was just not the case for us. Andre had hoped for 50 and we only received 34.*

Marissa Day: *Every community is different, maybe 34 is pretty good for your community? If they have a history of a bad taste in their mouth the fact that you got 34 is a good thing. Setting the target at 50 was way too high. It is difficult to set the sample number because we do a formula but the formula doesn't always describe the community. I was trying to gather that feedback.*

Matt Barrett: *How do we change the conversation? How do we change the perception? How do we move ahead?*

Marissa Day: *Maybe doing something is just enough of a goal as it is.*

Charlie French: *(by tele communication) I have some observations you have focused on the struggle to get volunteers to conduct a very intensive survey like this and that has been a challenge to every community. As some of you have suggested it has to be more manageable and you have to ask the question, are we really going to use the data? Marc you said the conversation is probably the most important part and I agree with you, and maybe we should emphasize more of the conversation component. Also I want to emphasize the importance of follow up with the businesses and discussing strategy.*

Charlie French: *UNH Cooperative Extension has a new person fulfilling Andre roll starting in July. If you want support or need help please contact us.*

Alden Beauchemin: *It is important that Hooksett is clear in what way we are going with new development and this report is helpful for getting to bottom of some of these issues.*

Board Member Term – length and expiration

Jo Ann Duffy: *The web site states the committee can be made up of 9 or more. According to the web site there is 1 open position which is a resident position. When the committee was appointed there were no expiration dates connected with the regular member appointments, normally they would be 3 year terms. Because there were none to begin with, you can't obviously begin your appointment tomorrow then all the terms would all expire on the same date. We need to stagger the term dates.*

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Dean Shankle: A suggestion: *Let's do it like we do all the others and end them at the end of June. If you are going to add more I think the one thing that is important to the Council is to add more residents then outside business members. The goal is to rotate through with 3, 3, 3, at any given time.*

A discussion of appointments and assigning term expiration that will meet those goals:

David Scarpetti Chair, Resident Member	term expires 06/30/2018
Ivan Gult, Resident Member	term expires 06/30/2018
Alden Beauchemin, Business Representative	term expires 06/30/2020
Dan Lagueux, Resident Member	term expires 06/30/2019
Matt Barrett, Business Representative	term expires 06/30/2019
Dan Bouchard, Business Representative	term expires 06/30/2020
Marc Miville, Council Representative	1 year appointment no expiration
Paul Scarpetti, Planning Board Representative	1 year appointment no expiration
Vacant Resident representative	3 year term 06/30/2018

David Scarpetti: *We need to find a Resident Member and a Business representative. Do we all agree with these term dates?*

Dean Shankle: *You should take this as a recommendation to the Council and they will vote on it.*

Marc Miville: *I will present this during my sub-committee report*

Project Ideas – Suggestions from BR&E, Community Profile, Master Plan:

Jo Ann Duffy: *-I went through Community Profile, the BR&E and the EDC chapter of the Master Plan and copied the list of suggested items for Economic Development in general and thought you may want to pick a project you would like to work on this year. The Master Plan is the oldest document. Some items are already in the works or have been coordinated. One of the items if possible, we have a 79E tax incentive zone program that we may want to look at. It is a tax incentive program for people who may want to clean up their look, their building the facade of the building. We should look into the state regulations for what it can be used for. Can it be used for commercial properties?*

We should look into the regulations and who can use the incentive. Residential, Commercial or Industrial.

David Scarpetti: *I think maybe we should go back to the Ambassador Program that would be great to reach to several businesses we would call and schedule something have a couple question you would like to ask and go visit them, it is a personal touch.*

Dean Shankle: *I would like to suggest and I would like to be part of working down the 3A side of it, maybe focusing on that. There are a lot of small businesses along there. What we are talking about could impact them with the TIF district.*

David Scarpetti: *That is a good idea to concentrate over there. There may be a possible sewer coming along there.*

Marc Miville: *Start at one end and work our way up. I gave the store manager of Market Basket a copy of the TIF plan and they really appreciated that.*

David Scarpetti: *Can we use private monies for the sewer?*

Dean Shankle: *We can look into it but we would have to put together a plan.*

David Scarpetti: *There are several business that are interested in sewer, let's get a list of the business on 3A pair up and reach out make a list of general questions and go to each and visit the businesses.*

Marc Miville: *Let's provide them with the TIF report.*

Jo Ann Duffy: *Has a list of businesses that can be provided at the next meeting*

Dean Shankle- *I would like to participate in the visits also. Probably the smaller businesses are what I would be interested in.*

David Scarpetti: *Next meeting we will put together a list and start to plan our visits.*

A discussion of new development going on in Hooksett

Old Business:

Jo Ann Duffy: *Provided the list of follow up calls from the BR&E that were discussed to have members call.*

David Scarpetti was going to call CGI.

Paul Scarpetti was going to call Paradigm Plumbing & Heating.

Someone was going to call Ambrose Equipment

Someone was going to call Aubin Woodwork Cabinets. They are presently in Bow and are looking for something bigger.

Display Cases for business promotion follow up:

Dean Shankle: *We moved a few cabinets already in the halls used by other committees. We need to take the next steep and see what is left downstairs.*

Marc Miville: *Provided an idea for a display case to use for Hooksett restaurant menus. Also, someone had asked about a budget for EDC*

Jo Ann Duffy: **I think there is \$500.**

Town Planner's Update – Jo Ann Duffy

A Few small subdivisions have come to Planning. We are ahead in numbers of applications this past year (2016). We are the highest in a 10 year period.

Chuckster's is going to Planning with buffer zone encroachments and the Planning Board is requesting them to come back with an amended plan conforming to the Ordinance.

Dean Shankle: -A letter to address that has been received by the committee members:
First, the person that wrote the letter I do not know well enough to not like him. When I first started here in 2011 The Hooksett Chamber basically just started. At that time Hooksett economic development really wanted to get a relationship started but the problem was and still is that their meeting day's conflict with Town Council meetings. No Councilor can ever go to the

meetings, I can't go to the meetings. So that is what happened back in the beginning. We had tried to talk with them about changing the dates but that just never work out. I did reach to Joe Bretton today and set up a meeting to talk with him and see if we can straighten some of this out, because I don't want anyone to think I have something against the Hooksett Chamber, because I don't.

Also today I talked with staff in Community Development because one of the things of the last 20 years is that everything has been difficult supposedly. But because of the changes we have made the staff feels pretty good about things. A big thing that I think has made a big difference and complaints have dropped off tremendously that the town went along with a town Engineer. We want to be business friendly. It is difficult to get participation sometimes but this is a working class town and everyone is busy. I am glad to see everyone on this committee wants to stay. You have a good committee.

David Scarpetti: *This committee has a lot of interest in the success of Hooksett and with making things better. I have been on this committee for a long time and there has never been a connection with EDC and the Chamber. We started to get that with Dan Bouchard. It would be nice to keep the Chamber involved with what we are doing. I hope something can develop with Joel.*

Dean Shankle: *There was talk of having a representative from the Hooksett Chamber on this board. If the Hooksett Chamber is willing to do that then they would have to go to Town Council and have them do that. I don't know why that did not happen but it a possibility still. I think now is a good time to start this.*

David Scarpetti: *There have been so many good changes that make things smoother for people who come to the boards. Things are more positive.*

Marc Miville: *What businesses need to understand is that the town has to operate in certain ways by law. There are some misunderstandings about what the procedures are for us, we have to do things certain ways and some business may not appreciate that. It is sometimes more about the process of procedure and laws to protect others, everybody that may be involved. This is a town board it is not a business board and yes, you are coming to a town board and have to comply with all the town rules and regulations by that.*

David Scarpetti: *We do want to build those businesses and try to help.*

Matt Barrett: *It would be hard to operate without Chamber.*

Motion to accept Minutes: Marc Miville made a motion to approve March 15th 2017 minutes,

2nd: Alden Beauzheimin with changes as noted:

On page 3: Marc Miville has a correction to what he was quoted as saying "The Master Plan has not been fully delved into" To read "Has not been fully updated since 2004."
Change Matt Bouchard to Matt Barrett

On page 6: "Form the other side of the river" To read "From the other side of river."

David Scarpetti & Alden Beauzheimin: Abstained

Motion Carried

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Next Meeting Date May 17, 2017 @ 4:30pm

Meeting adjourned @ 6:47

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Kathy Lawrence

Posted 4/26/2017