

**Town of Newington, NH**  
**Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 25, 2021 Remote Via Zoom**

**Attending Meeting by Zoom:**

Chair Jeff Hiatt, Vice-Chair Mike Donahue, Jill Boynton, Bob Raymond, Brsndon Arsenault (6:30) Economic Development Coordinator Karen Anderson, and Town Administrator Martha Roy.

**Absent:** Alicia Busconi, John Lamson

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

J. Hiatt called the meeting to order at 6pm and read the required statement in accordance with the Right to Know law.

**Minutes Approval:** M. Donahue moved to approve the minutes of February 25, 2021. B. Raymond seconded the motion with all in favor by roll call. When the quorum was present, minutes were approved by roll call with 4 in favor and 1 abstain (Arsenault).

**Business Appreciation Effort**

K. Anderson said that the next edition of the Business Newsletter is being prepared with an emphasis on State grant opportunities and business re-opening guidelines. The Board of Selectmen signed the proclamation recognizing Custom Pools and presented it last week.

Hauch Storage has been in Newington for 38 years and will be recognized in an upcoming newsletter. Additionally, JoAnne Fabrics has been in town for 30 years, Olive Garden for 28 years and Best Buy, Barnes & Noble and IHOP have been in town for 23 years. Whole Life Wellness Center on Shattuck Way has reached 22 years.

M. Donahue suggested an article about the restaurants that have survived the pandemic would be appropriate, including IHOP, Olive Garden and Outback.

**Open Discussion re: Informational Presentations**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> Karen Pollard from the Waterstone Group spoke about the redevelopment of the South Gate Plaza and West End Yards in Portsmouth. She shared her experience in Economic Development in Rochester and Connecticut, pointing out that flexible regulations and a willingness to be creative were important. K. Pollard will be the guest speaker for the April 22<sup>nd</sup> EDC meeting and will be able to show the residential impact from the South Gate Plaza (Portsmouth Green) development. The Planning Board will be invited to attend that meeting, which will be held via Zoom.

## **Report on Conference Calls**

### **NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs**

B. Raymond reported that the meeting talked about the increased demand for bio-med facilities and commercial kitchens. Bob said that the sites need to have the necessary infrastructure of water and sewer. The site of the former Asia Restaurant was suggested.

### **Seacoast Economic Development Roundtable**

K. Anderson reported that the recent sessions focused on the recently released grants for businesses effected by the Covid-19 pandemic and that the rules have not been released by the Federal government as yet, creating a challenge for the application process. It was noted that while many people are getting vaccinated, businesses must still require the wearing of masks inside. In an effort to help the businesses deal with mask resistance, signs and materials have been made available from the State.

SB 155 passed the Senate which will allow outdoor dining through 2023. The Offshore Wind Procurement Act was approved so vendors can now be sought.

## **Meeting with Planning Board**

J. Hiatt noted that the Planning Board meeting is scheduled for the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Planning Board has requested a list of the topics to be discussed to keep the discussion focused. M. Donahue said that the intent is to build a better relationship and be able to collaborate with them. B. Raymond said it will be an opportunity to discuss any differences of opinion.

J. Hiatt noted that the meeting is in person. Members expressed concerns about attending an in-person meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic. B. Arsenault suggested that the meeting be postponed until summer when the meeting can be held outside since there are no time sensitive issues.

M. Donahue noted that the Planning Board's report in the Town Report showed that they are interested in Economic Development. J. Hiatt will let D. Hebert know that the EDC will postpone meeting with the PB at this time.

## **New Business**

### **Committee Membership**

B. Arsenault asked about status of the membership on the Economic Development Committee. M. Roy said that terms that expire in 2021 are M. Donahue, J. Hiatt and B. Raymond. Letters requesting to be re-appointed should be sent to the Board of Selectmen. It was noted that there was not a quorum present for the first half-hour of this meeting; the minutes were re-approved with the quorum present.

### **News Communications/Topics**

M. Donahue said that he will write an article on the off shore wind topic. An article about the mask requirements and outdoor dining will be written by K. Anderson.

J. Boynton and K. Anderson are working on an article focusing on the home businesses in Newington, including her business and Knight Hill Surveying. B. Raymond will work with K. Anderson on an article about the medical practices in Newington.

#### **Update on Turning Basin**

M. Donahue told the committee that the Army Corps of Engineers is on schedule for the dredging of the turning basin. The cost of the dredging has come in within the estimate; the O & M for mobilization and permitting has increased and as a result the State share is \$1.5 million short. The shortage is being pursued through the Capital Budget Committee.

#### **Fox Run Mall**

B. Arsenault asked about discussion with Morgan Stanley in regard to the future of the mall. J. Hiatt explained that Morgan Stanley owns the inline sections of the mall as an asset of a pension investment fund and they will not be able to continue to fund the investment indefinitely.

#### **Pease Privatization**

B. Arsenault asked if there had been any discussions about the potential privatization of Pease. M. Roy explained that the PDA Board discussed this matter at the request of the Governor several months ago and voted at that time to not support it. M. Donahue said that the proposal was that the airport zone would continue to be owned by the PDA and the other areas would be released from the PDA land lease and sold to the existing tenants. It is a subject that the EDC should monitor.

M. Donahue pointed out that the Planning Board had a zoning article this year to prepare for that possibility that will give them a year to determine the zoning of the area. The committee agreed that they would not want to see any changes made to existing uses and this could be a future discussion with the Planning Board.

#### **Donor Town Status**

B. Arsenault asked about the status of the State Education Tax donor town status. M. Roy told the committee that Paul Deschaine testified at the House Ways & Means Committee on behalf of the town and the Bill has been tabled for 2021. M. Donahue added that the Supreme Court delayed any resolution of the suit brought by towns in the western part of the state and sent it back to the trial court.

#### **Adjournment**

M. Donahue moved to adjourn at 7:17 PM. B. Raymond seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Anderson  
Economic Development Coordinator