

Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2009

Present: Jason Lenk, Doug Clark, Chris Mueller, Tom Elliot
Absent: Pete Ventura, Susan Fuller
Staff: James Cambell

I. Call to order

The meeting started at approximately 7:30

II. Agenda

The agenda was approved

III. Public Comments

No formal public comments

IV. Minutes

Doug moved to approve, Jason second all were in favor of the August 14, 2009 minutes. The August 28, 2009 minutes were placed to the following meeting due to two individuals abstaining from the vote.

V. SWAT Analysis

Chair Mueller discussed that he would meet with the council on September 21, 2009 with a revised version based on input from the committee in the August 28, 2009 meeting.

The SWAT update is as follows:

Labor markets, skills, wage rates and productivity were major strengths. Productivity could not be measured since there was an assumption that it could not be placed anywhere else. Financial capital was classed as limited strength and correctable weakness. Tom indicated that we should in fact move this to a correctable weakness. The committee agreed. Access to markets and proximity to markets and suppliers was deemed as limited strength, with reasonable access to ports and major highways, however there is minimal airport access. Sites access, correctable weakness due to limited space for development, however there are possible sites in town for future development. Several examples were given. Cost of infrastructure and rents assumed as neutral. There was lengthy discussion due to elevated student rental amounts. Knowledge resources (limited strength due to college), R&D facilities (limited strength due to college) and trade associations (neutral due to limited availability) specifically identified the DBA as Durham's chamber and there main focus on main street only. Education & Training were identified as limited strength due to regional area, specifically the seacoast area. Other areas indicated was Business climate, private/public cooperation (correctable weakness) government responsiveness (limited strength), taxes and regulations (correctable weakness). Quality of life was added; however this was identified as a subjective measure and placed as a limited strength with various pros and cons. Public service was considered a major strength. All adjustments mentioned above will be made prior to bringing to the council.

VI. Review/Update Strategic

Jim mentioned that he will be updating the plan with figures from the demographics and economic conditions, with additional information on the commercial and industrial assets with an expected report within the next two weeks.

VII. Other Comments

Questions were raised by chair Mueller to the committee if the committee should engage in an external SWAT analysis. Chair Mueller mentioned to put the external SWAT on the following meeting and Doug agreed only if it was done in a short time rather than the time it took to create the internal SWAT analysis.

Tom questioned whether this committee is for analysis or is it for hands on promotion of economic growth. Doug Clark indicated that we are a committee that should be proactive in creating outlets for economic development. Chair Mueller indicated that for the past 2 years the committee has been reacting rather than being proactive. Additionally, the committee is there to support the town council in movement and analyzing the environment of the town and its direction. Essentially, isolate what we should be doing as a town for economic development using a data driven analysis.

Update from Doug Clark regarding the council meetings and how it relates to the EDC. B Dennis gave a presentation. Doug mentioned that B Dennis should see the SWAT analysis.

Jim gave the committee updates on local properties either being built or changed.

Mill Plaza requested additional parking spaces, however were turned down.

Bryant properties is current moving forward and expected to be green

Further discussion came from the zoning issues in town with this being an issue. Jim mentioned Dover and the zoning and the ease of some areas in Dover.

The Hickory Pond Inn is under the process of being foreclosed on. Jim indicated that the town had created several obstacles preventing business. Specifically, variances needed for a tent for each event, renovation of a barn, and the placement of the restaurant.

One proposal was sent back regarding the Grange for a Mexican restaurant. The restaurant will be opening in the old Movie Stop in the Mill Plaza store.

Jason made a motion to adjourn, Doug second. Meeting was adjourned.