

Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes

October 23, 2009

Present: Douglas Clark, Susan Fuller, Jason Lenk, and Tom Elliott

Absent: Peter Ventura (submitted resignation) and Chris Mueller

Staff Present: Jim Campbell

I. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 7:40 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. Public Comments – There was no public comment at this time.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of September 11, 2009, September 25, 2009, and October 9, 2009 were approved as amended.

V. Business Retention, Expansion, and Visitation Program

The discussion started off the three groups of people the EDC is trying to reach: Businesses thinking about coming to Durham; Existing businesses; and businesses that are leaving Durham.

Discussion then turned to trying to get a list of questions together that the EDC can distribute to the business community. Some of the examples that were discussed included whether or not the entity had a business plan, what their capitalization was at the time of opening the business or whether it was adequate, and finally who was their target market.

The Committee then discussed the reasons for having a visitation program. First, if a business needs help this is a good way to find out and try to help. Secondly, the exchange of information could be very helpful for both parties. Thirdly, we need to make sure that our policies are sound or need to be adjusted.

Jason Lenk discussed his experience about opening a small business in Durham versus opening one in South Berwick, ME. His Durham experience was longer and more expensive.

There was also some discussion on the different phases of opening and running a business from creating a business plan, the approval process, and support/resources.

Tom Elliott asked if there was a list of businesses in Durham. Mr. Campbell said that the town keeps a list and he will provide it to the Committee.

There was further discussion on the list of questions to ask and whether or not there was any chance of confidentiality. The right-to-know law would affect the work that is done since we are a public entity.

Cathy Leech, a member of the public, stated that she thought that it would be very important to have some up-front PR done so people are aware of what we are doing. The Committee agreed. Mr. Campbell stated that he would draft a letter that would go out to all business with the list of questions. Mr. Elliott said he would draft a list of questions based on the Committee's discussion.

VI. Review of Strategic Plan

Mr. Campbell gave a brief overview of the Plan and stated that it is still moving ahead but slowly. He will get back to the Committee with a deadline. An end of the year deadline has been discussed.

VII. Other Business (Old and New)

Old Business – The Town Council and Planning Board representatives reported on their perspective Boards and what has been happening.

New Business – The Committee did not discuss Wi-Fi in the Down town and will place it on the next agenda. The Committee set November 13, 2009 and December 11, 2009 as the meeting dates for November and December. Finally, the Committee discussed the resignation of Peter Ventura and the possible elevation of Tom Elliott to a regular member to complete Peter's term.

VIII. Next Agenda and Assignments

This item was not discussed.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:05 am.

Susan Fuller, Acting Secretary