

Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2010

Present: Chris Mueller, Tom Elliott, and Richard England*

Absent: Douglas Clark, Susan Fuller, and Jason Lenk

Staff Present: Jim Campbell

*The alternate, Richard England, sat in Jason Lenk who was absent for the meeting.

I. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 7:33 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as amended by removing item V and adding Time and Date of meetings to Old Business.

III. Public Comments

Robin Mower – Town Councilor/Faculty Road

Councilor Mower spoke about the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) project that is being discussed at the Town Council. The idea is to create conservation land around Spruce Hole, Spruce Woods, and Tecce Property connecting to College Woods while having the Town put up the Grange property downtown as a match for a grant. She stated that the Town Council will be given a presentation on this project at their February 1, 2010 meeting. There were handouts passed out that included aerial photos of the site. There was discussion on the proposed that followed.

There was a question raised as to why the Grange property is involved and it was stated that this would be the town's match for a Grant that the TPL is applying for to help purchase the property.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of January 8, 2010 were not approved and will be placed on the February 12, 2010 agenda.

V. Election of Officers

This item was removed from the agenda.

VI. Durham Business Park

The Committee met with the CEO and CFO of Neuro-Rehab Associates, Inc. They are interested in purchasing the Durham Business Park to develop a rehabilitation facility. They have received a Certificate of Need from the NH Department of Health & Human Services. They received the certificate two (2) years ago and were just granted a six (6) month extension. Unfortunately, they stated that Durham is their second choice due to the fact that they have been dealing with the Pease Development Authority for some time already. They have a ton and a half of money into the project at Pease. However, they have been hitting many roadblocks at Pease. They are not only dealing with the Pease Development Authority but also the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). All have different rules in silos. This has made for good days and bad days.

There was some discussion on what they do as a facility including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc. They do this on an in-patient basis but not long-term. They are not a hospital because they do not have surgical facilities, an emergency room, ambulatory care, etc. They will employ 90 people, 33 beds, and would have approximately 625 patients a year. The CFO stated that it would produce approximately \$9 million a year in expenditures in goods and trade. The construction costs for the facility is in the \$11 million range. They really think that the Business Park is a great location and if they could only turn back the clock they would have chosen it first.

They went on to discuss the issues and challenges they face in Durham. They are very happy with the discussions and cooperation they are getting from Durham, especially in light of the issues with the property. The Zoning does not allow this type of facility. The Ordinance has a use for a Hospital but it is not allowed in this zone. The zone does allow Medical Clinics but only on an out-patient basis. There is no use for a rehabilitation facility. They will need to obtain a variance. The Town is going to be a joint applicant since they own the property. They would like the EDC to write a letter of support to the ZBA. They are also in discussions with the NHDOT for an entrance permit to Route 4.

The Committee members asked questions about the facility and whether it is a for profit company. It was stated that it is a for profit business. They are the only company to hold the Certificate of Need in the Seacoast and only one will be issued. They would like to have a decision for us within 6-8 weeks. The EDC wanted to know what the town could do to incentivize them to come to Durham. They stated that they really appreciate the offer but considering the amount of money and time they have with developing in Pease, they need to see it through. Again, they will need to decide within 6-8 weeks.

VII. Discussion with UNH Professor Kevin Gardner on UNH initiative to start a launch pad for clean tech businesses

Mr. Gardner stated that this initiative was mentioned in the Governor's State of the State Address. It is a "green" launching pad and is being funded with \$750,000 dollars from the State of NH. This will be a competition for entrepreneurs to work with UNH students and faculty to produce a product. It will be done over the summer of 2010. They will create business plans, establish their projects, and then take them to Venture Capitalists. Mr. Gardner said that he was part of the steering committee with other faculty. He went on further to state that the University is moving toward more commercialization of projects coming from the University. He said that leveraging what the University has really helps.

There was some discussion on incubators that the Town of Durham needs to have these available. Downtown would be an ideal location for the incubators and then when the companies get large enough they could move to Technology Drive.

VIII. Other Business (Old and New)

Old Business – This item was not discussed due to lack of time.

New Business – This item was also not discussed due to the absence of both the Council representative and the Planning Board representative.

IX. Next Agenda and Assignments

The following was discussed as agenda items for the next meeting: Election of Officers; minutes from January 8th and January 22nd; roundtable discussion with business owners on the commercial market in the downtown; and time and date for meetings.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:05 am.

Chris Muller, Chair

Date