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Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes March 22, 2010

I. Call to Order: This session was aired live on DCAT.

Present: Doug Clark, Susan Fuller, Jason Lenk, Tom Elliott, Richard England, Jim Campbell

Absent: Chris Mueller

II. Approval of Agenda: approved as presented.

III. Public Comments

Malcolm McNeil: Suggests EDC participate in discussions of site review regulation changes to storm water drainage and shoreland protection discussions, there needs to be a balancing voice for the economic impact for specific projects, there is no danger as Planning Board will always retain ultimate authority.

Robin Mower: The amendment to site plan review for storm water regulations is being discussed in a public hearing at the Planning Board. She recommends the EDC Project Specific subcommittee hold its meetings as part of the conceptual review process in conjunction with the planning board.

Dick Gottsneider: MUDOR lacks Comcast (broadband) connectivity- renegotiate contract for access to Durham in 2012.

IV. Approval of Minutes: March 5, 2010: Approved as presented.

V. Discussion with MIS Director Luke Vincent

Re: Providing high-speed data links for business use and growth in downtown.

Key is to find out what fiber networks are already available, not what we can build. Does not recommend building a municipal network, maintenance is too expensive. Recommends working with Fairpoint at the central office on McDaniel Drive, and see if they are willing and capable of expanding their offerings to the Town. Hard to market to tech companies if you don't know what they need.

Expanding general internet access via Wifi in downtown, is working on a map with Jim Campbell, will submit to UNH and other vendors for cost estimate for extending wireless access hot spots.

Definitions: wireless 3G via Sprint and Verizon, HFC (hybrid fiber coax) network via Comcast, Fiber network (Cat 5/6) via Fairpoint at central office/co-location center on McDaniel Drive.

VI. Durham Landlord Association

Board Members: Dick Gottsneider, Tom Richardson, Paul Burton

Student rental housing market is soft due to 1) Down economy 2) increased beds at UNH 3) competing communities 4) increased beds in town.

Other issues: Working to resolve disruptions caused by speculative rental housing market moving into neighborhood single family homes. UNH is educating students better, enforcement is better. DLA represents 18% of Durham tax base- all filing for abatements, feel they are over-assessed. Financial challenges to adapt old buildings to current codes, asking for flexibility to make transition easier. Vacancy rate is 12-14%. Estimated +1000 beds added in last 4 years. One member pays \$140/pp/mo to property taxes. UNH has ~35K sq ft of retail, 19 coffee stops, diverse services available locally from entrepreneurial students. Wants UNH bookstore to move downtown.

VII. Subcommittees:

Purpose is to keep lengthy project- specific discussions in public, engage public early in the process, and out of regular EDC meetings. Concern was expressed about the informality of EDC subcomms. This committee will ask different questions than the Planning Board, including implications for the tax

base, tax rate, # and kinds of job creation, infrastructure needs and demands on municipal services, diversity of services brought to town, etc.

a. Development and Project Specific Review

- i. Actively recruiting and will meet as needed, will inform public of meeting times, will enumerate the process for potential proposals.

b. Marketing and Branding of Durham

- i. Business Identification and Recruitment Committee. It was recommended a land strategy take place with zoning and infrastructure first, then identify businesses.

c. Business Retention Program

- i. Letters have gone out, can be sent back by mail. Recruitment is ongoing.

d. Downtown/Commercial Core Revitalization

- i. B.Dennis report is back, what next... Town Council will decide whether to ask for recommendations to change current zoning or go to Form Based Codes (FBCs).

ii. 3 possible steps

1. Market Analysis—what kinds of businesses to put in Durham ~\$30K
2. Traffic and street-scape study put into action plan. Will need funding.
3. Decide on direction of zoning (current vs. FBC)

e. Strategic Plan/Master Plan Advisory

A strategic plan is actionable, is a living/working document to take the lead in getting something going. Jim will communicate what help is needed to get it to final draft. Strategic plan will be developed synchronously with Master Plan update, and SP can be amended to fit the MP.

VIII. Market Analysis:

- a. Def: Research for what Durham can be economically, what kinds of businesses, where we are and what business activity is possible. Should exclude residential sections of town, 3 month process with in-depth analysis.

- b. EDC will develop a Council Communication regarding scope, cost, and funding.

IX. TDR/DTC & IZIP

- a. TDR: Richard states it's not appropriate for small towns. B.Dennis was skeptical of TDR.
- b. EDC votes 4-1 to cancel contract for TDR with use of funds TBD. Susan votes nay.
- c. IZIP: inclusionary zoning for workforce housing, stock must be available. Jim has working group, and \$9K grant from NH Housing Authority.

X. Farmers Market: Moving to plaza parking lot on Mondays.

XI. Other Business

- a. Old Business-none
- b. New Business- TC refining last year's goals. PB is considering temp housing at Seacoast Rep site.

XII. Next Agenda and Assignments: not discussed

XIII. Adjournment: 10pm