

Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2010
Council Chamber, Town of Durham

Present Board Members: Doug Clark, Susan Fuller, Tom Elliott, Chris Mueller, Richard England, Jim Campbell, Jim Lawson (alternate), Ute Luxem (alternate), Yusi Wang Turell (subcommittee co-chair)

1. **Meeting called to order by Tom Elliott at 7:00pm.** Elliott introduced new alternate members Luxem and Lawson to the public. Introduced Yusi Wang Turell as person willing to serve on a subcommittee of the EDC.
2. **Meeting Etiquette and DCAT Protocol.** Elliott explained that all EDC meetings will be recorded and screened on TV in the future. It is essential to speak through the microphone. Guests are asked to please not shake the podium and keep an approximate 12 inch distance from the microphone. He apologized for any inconvenience this might cause.
3. **Approval of Agenda.** Board moved to approve agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Public Comments.** Malcolm McNeill cautioned the EDC about form based zoning as a form of land use control. He explained the only town currently using it in the area is Dover. McNeill would like to see the planning process targeted towards Durham needs. He applauded the EDC for searching a comprehensive RFP market analysis which includes the entire Town of Durham, not only the downtown area. He feels a thorough market analysis will help keep fact from fiction and help make sophisticated decisions. No further public comments at this time.
5. **Approval of Minutes.** Clark moved to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2010 meeting as presented, seconded by Campbell. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **Market Analysis RFP.** Mueller introduced reasons and need for a market analysis. So far, the EDC has worked with UNH on a marketing strategy for the Town. During the public hearing of the B. Dennis report, the public requested to get an objective market analysis to find out facts and constraints of Economic Development in Durham. The language for the proposal to perform a town wide market analysis is adequate, but should include a SWAT analysis, and what constraints and limitations (including zoning) exist for the town. Mueller questioned the value of public input for this specific analysis because its goal is analysis of the actual situation rather than creation of an action plan.
This analysis shall ultimately
 - help with the marketing and branding of Durham
 - help with the strategic plan
 - help find out what is possible and provide factual evidence
 - explain zoning limitations

During the discussion between members of the EDC and members of the public the following suggestions were made:

- The study should show constraints and limitations Durham faces
- Show how Durham will benefit from this study.

The following topics were discussed controversially:

- Should the public input be part of the analysis?

PRO: Will give the consultant an idea what type of business will fit the Town personality

Will engage Durham residents early on

CON: Might influence the consultant to reiterate the public opinion rather than provide an independent study of supply, infrastructure and demand.

EDC decided to leave it to the consultant how to integrate public input into the analysis.

England liked positions 3 and 4 and wanted the University impact to be part of this study because it impacts Durham's economy and vice versa.

Clark wondered if the study should include a perspective of a fully developed downtown, and how UNH's presence could be used as leverage to Economic Development. He felt that the study should reflect a diverse downtown including retail and mid sized businesses of 1-2 million in revenue. Clark felt that adding unlimited student housing to the downtown area will not be the right way to go in the future as the Town seems to have more supply than demand at this time. Clark feels point 5 is underemphasized. He does not want to put too much emphasis on the actual situation but wants to incorporate a vision of what can be created. He wants public transportation, (trolleys and bike paths) made part of the RFP.

Mueller asked to include business diversity in the RFP.

He asked how high buildings can be in downtown. Campbell explained that downtown buildings can be 3-6 stories high.

Clark asked for the survey to reflect what happens if downtown houses are bigger, including the need of public transportation.

Lawson read several market analyses from several similar communities. All these papers included an inventory of current supply (office space, retail, and housing) to set a baseline. Then, they project the demand 5-10 years from now through a gap analysis. A gap analysis looks at the different types of retail, project future sales, and concludes future space demand and revenue projections. This method is used to determine what kind of business is suitable to a town as well. He stressed the importance of knowing where and how the data provided was generated, the method used. Lawson mentioned indexes as one source of determination of future demand

Luxem asked the study to be well balanced and to focus on diverse businesses. Wang Turell feels the market analysis will provide an objective data in addition to the Baden's report. She wants to use it as a basis for an action plan.

Fuller asked what the budget for the analysis will be. Elliott explained that the ECD solicited quotes and sees what comes back. He hopes to get a good price in the recent economy. Town Administrator Selig asked for clarification of the question. Fuller explained that the market analysis and the strategic plan will incur cost. She wondered how much this will be. Selig explained that a complete plan could cost around \$40,000 which would concern him because this money is not budgeted for. He guesses the initial analysis will cost \$10,000-\$15,000, and a more in depth one needs to be negotiated. The following funds are available at this point:

- \$12,000 Transfer Development Right Study
- \$ 5,000 EDC Budget

Smaller amount budgeted for general consulting services, and master plan work. Selig would like to keep monies for the Master Plan available to that project.

Considering the probable cost of an independent market analysis, England raised the question whether UNH should be invited to participate in the study. Selig explained that Durham has worked with UNH before; however, in order for UNH to co-pay, it would need to have some benefit of its own. Durham runs the risk that a mutual study might not explore the issues Durham is most focused on.

Elliott opened the meeting to public discussion.

Maria Simos supported working with UNH to save the Town money. She questioned the time it would take to organize a mutual study.

Wang Turell learned UNH is looking to become more entrepreneurial. The University is a competitive advantage of Durham. She felt it would make sense to work together with the University.

Malcolm McNeill felt the economic analysis should be funded by the Town as UNH has not attracted high tech companies to Durham. The analysis should not solely focus on retail, or downtown Durham. He asked the question why companies like Liberty Mutual and Lonza moved to neighboring towns.

Mueller excused himself at 8:10.

Chip Noon was concerned a consultant could use standard wording from some internet format, and not really add value to the Towns analysis. He questioned if the analysis would be too basic for the money Durham can offer. He emphasized the need for a sophisticated market analysis. He feels the question, "What do we want and what do we want to be?" should be reflected in the analysis. Noon suggested starting a focus group prior to starting a market analysis.

Clark questioned how residents would react to certain businesses. He asked if UNH would have a tool kit available to use for market research. Would the master plan provide guidance? Campbell confirmed the master plan provides sufficient information for a consultant. He recommended leaving the decision to the consultant.

Noon was concerned about the possibility of buying a standardized market analysis at high price. He asked to use extra caution in choosing a consultant. Fuller felt Durham should hire a consultant familiar with the Town.

EDC members agreed to have the subcommittee "Marketing and Branding of Durham" review revisions to the "Request for Proposals to Perform a Town-Wide Market Analysis", and review incoming quotes.

- 7. Update on Current and Proposed Development Projects in Town.** The Jenkins Court project is going well. Tom Christy is constructing a building right next to this location. Harry Bryant's project at RTE 155 is on schedule. All projects are projected to be finished in fall of 2010.

Town is working with the Seacoast Repertory Theater; it is proposed to demolish Don Thompson Real Estate and build a mixed use building in its place. Murphy will finish a 4 unit building at Rosemary Lane by June 1, 2010. Capstone is coming to town with a student housing proposal.

Traffic disturbances will occur this summer because of road construction in downtown. A 79E project is proposed at a fraternity building at Madbury Road.

Selig pointed out that the Towns request to declare a revitalization zone is held up by DRED.

A proposal by Doug Greene to open a Mexican Restaurant in Mill Plaza is moving forward. The restaurant is expected to open in June, 2010.

8. Subcommittees' reports and discussion regarding EDC subcommittees.

Committee Reports:

Development and project specific review.

Engelhard informed the EDC that Susan Fuller, Warren Daniel, and Jeff Sol are actively working with him on this subcommittee. They will hold informational sessions for developers to offer the opportunity to present their projects. Participation is voluntarily. The subcommittee focuses on infrastructure and services needed for a business to succeed. Emphasis is put on attracting diverse businesses to Durham.

Marketing and Branding of Durham.

Elliott explained that this committee wants to find out how Durham residents want to develop their town in the future and how desirable businesses can be attracted to our Town. Fuller asked if Mueller has volunteer support available to him. Elliott invited members of the public to volunteer on this subcommittee.

Diane Carroll (public input) asked who will recruit businesses to Durham.

Business Retention Program:

This committee mailed a questionnaire to Durham businesses to help find out what their specific needs are. Durham has about 130 businesses right now. The former chair recruited 5-6 people who are interested in visiting and engaging in conversations with those businesses in order to serve their needs. Several Town councilors are willing to participate. The chair position is currently vacant. Luxem and Wang Turell offered to co-chair this subcommittee.

Downtown/Commercial Core

Elliott explained that this committee is waiting for the B. Dennis report. Tasks will include transportation planning, beginning conversations with UNH, question if zoning needs to be changed to accommodate business, investigate options to bring WIFI to the downtown area, help the Farmers Market. Wildcat Fitness offered customers to the Farmers Market free access to his facility for 30 days. Luxem suggested publishing Farmers Market time and location in the weekly news update by Todd Selig. Selig is willing to entertain this if he receives a request from Farmers Market organizers. Elliott informed the public that an East West bus is planned from Manchester to Portsmouth. This bus is planned to stop in Durham.

A downtown business person approached Elliott with a request for support. Currently, zoning rules allow buildings in downtown Durham to be constructed with the following use:

- The first floor of a 3 story building has to be commercial, second and third floor need to be used for residential purposes
- The first and second floor of a 4 story building has to be used for commercial purposes while the third and fourth floor has to be used for residential purposes.

The business person requested support to change zoning regulations in a way that would let the owner of a building chose which of the upper floors of a 4story building could be used for

commercial purposes. He would like to use the 1st and 4th floor. EDC members agreed after discussion to support this request to the Planning Board.

Elliott researches options to bring WiFi to downtown Durham. He informed the committee of Bayring's plans to put WiFi into the RTE 108 corridor. He and Lawson will contact Bayring to find out if downtown Durham can be included in this service offering.

Some discussion developed around the possible relocation of the Durham Town offices, and the use of this lot. Selig stressed that this particular discussion is highly hypothetical as no decision has been made when and where, or if to move the Town Hall at all.

Strategic Plan/Master Plan Advisory.

Elliott explained the Town is moving to rewrite the Master Plan. This is the least structured subcommittee and Elliott questioned if it is needed at this point. Campbell explained that the Town will create a Master Plan Steering committee. The Master Plan has the following chapters: community core, energy, environment, natural resources, and tax stabilization. No economic development chapter is planned to be included in the Master Plan right now. After discussion, EDC members agreed to vacate this subcommittee for now the process for the master plan is still in its early stages. The EDC made clear that, should the Master Plan Advisory Committee meet before the next EDC meeting, the chair of the EDC should be invited.

1. Other Business

No other business.

The next meeting will be held Monday, May 24, 2010, at 7:00 pm

Motion: Clark moved to adjourn, seconded by England. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.