

Economic Development Committee

Monday, May 24, 2010

Town Council Chambers

Present: Tom Elliott, Chris Mueller, Douglas Clark, Jim Campbell, Jim Lawson, Ute Luxem

Absent: Richard England, Susan Fuller

Tom Elliott called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Elliott noted that regular members England and Fuller were absent and asked for a motion to elevate alternate members Lawson and Luxem to full voting status. Mueller moved this request, seconded by Clark. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the agenda. Clark asked to add a discussion of the summer schedule to the new business position of the agenda. Clark moved to accept the agenda with the amendment, seconded by Luxem. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments. Elliott invited public comments.

Clark explained an email by Neil Niman explaining the planned changes of the zoning ordinance of ORLI/MUDOR zones. Elliott invited the public to contact Niman directly if somebody wants a copy of his email.

Current Parking Discussion with Police Chief Steve Kurtz. Elliott noted that parking is a key element of Economic Development in downtown Durham, and asked Police Chief Kurtz for an update on the current situation.

History: parking tickets in Durham were \$5.00 for violations on Town parking spots, and \$20.00 on UHN controlled parking areas.

Parking violations are a source of income for the Town, providing for \$200,000 in revenue/year today

Parking Resources for businesses:

- 125 parking spaces in the Pettee Brook Parking Lot are sold to local business owners on a first come, first serve basis on the first business day of the year. They are in high demand and usually sell out within hours. Parking permits offer a “license to hunt” within the parking lot for any free space, except handicapped parking. The annual fee is \$150, and gives the owner the right to park in other parking areas around town that are less expensive. Parking passes are transferrable and simple tags for the rear mirror.
- There are still permanent business parking spots available at Madbury Road which can be purchased at a pro-rated price. These parking spots are cheaper than the Pettee Brook but

further away from downtown. Kurtz noted that these spots are less desired by local business people. 22 permits are still available for the remainder of 2010.

- The Town added spaces at Cowell Drive which can be rented for \$150/year.
- The Depot Road Parking Lot offers ample space for Community Parking. Extra parking spaces are reserved at the beginning of the lot to accommodate Durham residents that use the commuter train. These spots are rented out for \$120.00/semester, and can be used for free during UNH vacation.
- Patrons of local businesses can park for free in the Tedeschi parking lot, or along the sides of Main Street. Durham residents with sticker can park for 2 hours instead of 1 without being ticketed.

Lawson applauded the Chief for his 2007 revenue of parking options in downtown Durham, calling his work very thorough.

Mueller noticed that the Pettee Brook parking lot is never fully utilized and asked if student parking should be considered. Kurtz recommended against it because this space is preferred by the Durham business community. The discussion led to the conclusion that it should be possible to add additional parking permits to Durham businesses without impairing the ability of such to find a spot to park. Kurtz will research this possibility further.

Elliott thanked Chief Kurtz for his attendance and the information provided.

UNH and its Commercialization Efforts in Durham. Presentation and Discussion with Maria Emanuel of the UNH office of Research Partnerships and Commercialization (ORPC)

Mueller invited Maria Emanuel and Mark Galvin to this meeting as part of his subcommittees efforts to recruit new businesses to the Durham community.

Maria Emanuel is representing ORPC. Her office focuses on helping businesses use the intellectual property of UNH and market it. This is accomplished in two ways

1. A business approaches UNH and asks it to perform a certain research which it would like to use for commercial applications. UNH helps this business secure public funding, primarily through SBIR and STTR.
2. A business approaches UNH for research it already conducted and wants to apply it.

UNH's goal is the increase of the collection of royalties for such commercial use intellectual property.

Maria noted that UNH is in a position of transition which is a perfect time to reach out to each other and find common interests on how to support spin-off businesses.

Mark Galvin is in the process of starting a NH Innovation Commercialization Center at the Pease International Tradeport as an incubator for small businesses started at UNH with rapid growth potential. This will be a 501(c) non-profit agency.

He explained that Pease is more desirable for this kind of incubator because of

- Easy access to the national highways
- Representative space at reasonable prices

- Ample and free parking
- Close vicinity to other high tech/rapid growth companies.

Luxem asked if UNH offers any incubator services to businesses created by UNH employees or students that do not involve the creation of a royalty stream to the university. No such service exists at this point; although, some businesses established themselves on their own in close vicinity to UNH because they want to be easily accessible for student interns.

The committee thanked Emanuel and Galvin for their time and the information they shared.

Update on Current and Proposed Development Projects, Tax Relief Incentive Program Applications, Broadband Opportunities

Several new and redevelopments will be presented to the Zoning Board Wednesday night, among them the Redevelopment of the Don Thompson property by Ionian Properties.

Clark informed the Committee about possibilities of the possibilities of the new tax relief program in Town. In certain circumstances if a property is redeveloped and tax savings are used to create a capital fund for upkeep. His fraternity recently rebuild its house to attract a more desirable kind of student to its facility. He encourages other building owners who cater to student housing to research these possibilities with the Town.

Elliott informed the committee of his and Lawson's contacts with Bayring. This company offered significant interest to bring high speed fiber to downtown Durham if some customers are willing to sign up for service.

Conduct of Subcommittee work, use of Electronic Workspaces, Right to Know Law

Elliott informed members that, "Everything that's written down falls under the "Right to Know", Law". An information session will be held by the Town on Tuesday, May 25, at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers. He invited members of the Committee to attend the meeting.

Subcommittees – Reports and discussions regarding EDC subcommittees.

1. Development and Project Specific Review-, Chair-, Richard England

No new business

2. Marketing and Branding of Durham- Chair, Chris Mueller

Campbell informed the EDC that the Town had put out the Request for RFP and received many emails asking for clarification about the scope of work. No proposals have been received yet. He noted that Durham will join regional recruitment efforts.

3. Business Retention Program- Chair, Yusi Wang-Turrell.

Elliott informed that Wang-Turrell held a subcommittee meeting and is in the process of organizing a follow up meeting. She will be organizing volunteers to visit local businesses shortly.

4. Downtown/Commercial Core, Temporary Chair, Tom Elliott

- **Pettee Brook traffic and parking summer one lane experiment update**

The Town of Durham will introduce one lane traffic after Jenkins Court during the summer in order to slow traffic down. The other lane will be used for additional parking. This change can be made permanent if it proves successful.

- **Main Street Mondays and Farmers Market.** Will start June 7th. Everybody is invited to come. A flyer to all Durham households will be going out shortly. This project is mainly organized by the Durham Business Association (DBA).
- **Final Strategic Plan B. Dennis.** Now available at the Town Web site for download. One copy will be placed in the Library shortly.
- **Green Launching Pad in Durham.**

Subcommittee Structure Improvements.

1. **Creation of a new subcommittee to lead improvements to downtown parking and transportation planning in the near term.**

Lawson volunteered to research opportunities as accessibility is crucial to downtown economic development. During the discussion, Elliott noted that UNH will have residents ride for free this summer.

Mueller moved to create such subcommittee, seconded by Luxem. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **Continued discussion of need for Master Plan/Strategic Plan Subcom.**

Wang Turrell, and Elliott researched the issue and came to the conclusion that this subcommittee is oblivious. Wang Turrell help Elliott understand how to write an 18 month Strategic initiative Framework for the Economic Development Strategy. Elliott recommends dissolving this subcommittee. Clark and Luxem voiced concerns about the long term impact the ignoring of Economic Development Goals on the Master Plan will have. They emphasized that, even if no committee might be needed, a person needs to be appointed to represent EDC goals in the Master Plan Development process.

Mueller moved to eliminate the subcommittee, seconded by Campbell. The motion passed unanimously, with the request to assign a member of the EDC to follow up on the Master Plan Steering Committee proceedings.

Other Business.

Summer Schedule: The committee discussed the option to cancel the August meeting to let members take advantage of the last weeks of school vacation. Decision was delayed to June meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm.