

# *Approved - March 28, 2011*

**Economic Development Committee  
Monday, February 28, 2011  
Town Council Chambers  
7 PM**

**Members Present:** Yusi Wang Turell, James Lawson, Susan Fuller, Ute Luxem, Thomas Elliott, Jim Campbell, Doug Clark

**Public Present:** Malcolm McNeil

**Members Absent:** None

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Elliott called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

## **II. Approval of Agenda –**

Chair Elliott noted that the suggestion from Yusi Wang Turell to have a business begin the meeting will hopefully start with the March meeting.

*Susan Fuller MOVED to approve the agenda as written, this was SECONDED by James Lawson and APPROVED unanimously.*

## **III. Public Comments**

Malcolm McNeil of 44 Colony Cove in Durham NH asked to make a comment. Mr. McNeil noted that he has lived in Durham for 37 years. He thanked the members for their efforts toward economic development. Mr. McNeil said for many people in Durham the concept of economic development has not always been viewed as a constructive alternative. He commended the Committee for having reached out and initiated a dialogue about economic development. Mr. McNeil said he has noticed that the focus has been on the downtown area of Durham. He said his family owns 43 acres of commercially zoned property on a State Highway and suggested that economic development should consist of more than infilling in downtown Durham.

Mr. McNeil said the idea of TIF District is commendable, as are the efforts toward the survey and other means the Committee has employed to reach out to the community. He said if he had participated in the survey he would have said he feels the downtown needs to be looked at closely, but there are also other areas of the town that need to be looked at. Mr. McNeil suggested that other development projects like the Captstone project and development on state highways are far more likely to achieve economic development in Durham than the in filling of the downtown area. He suggested that landowners of property on the outskirts of town be spoken to regarding this. Mr. McNeil noted that two communities that use a committee like this effectively are Portsmouth and Rochester, and in those communities, new businesses go to the

committee for guidance regarding the process and to seek advice as well as assistance with the regulatory process. He said he feels this committee is capable in assisting a developer in this manner. Mr. McNeil closed his public comments by commending the members for their efforts and thanking them.

Doug Clark said he spent his first year on the Town Council with one project after another being proposed and denied that was outside of the business district. He said because of this the Council concluded that they needed to focus in an area that would not raise objections to development, and that was the central business district. Mr. Clark said the Council made a conscious decision to focus on the downtown and to come up with a long-term strategic plan that would help find ways to develop and expand the tax base. He said the Council felt that the momentum from one project, which the majority of the Town could get behind, might lead to other projects, both in the central business district and in other zones.

Tom Elliott said it is ironic that the Capstone project may be the biggest win in an economic development perspective in many years and had nothing to do with this committee.

Doug Clark said he feels if the downtown is a place that looks like a modern robust downtown it would be a magnet and not a deterrent to other businesses in town. He said he feels the key to sustaining businesses is businesses that cater to residents and not just students. Mr. Clark said he feels the majority of downtown businesses neglect the residents.

Tom Elliott invited Mr. McNeil to stay through the meeting for the TIF district discussion.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes – January 31, 2011**

Minor corrections were suggested by members to the January 31, 2011 minutes.

*Susan Fuller MOVED to accept the minutes as amended, this was SECONDED by James Lawson and APPROVED unanimously.*

#### **V. Presentation – Yusi Wang Turell on preliminary results from the Business Visitation & Retention interviews & survey.**

Yusi Wang Turell said the presentation would consist of preliminary findings from the Business Visitation Project and the survey. She said when she joined the Economic Development Committee last March it was understood that more personal outreach was needed. Ms. Turell said as a result a subcommittee was formed and during the period of June through February interviewed business owners of 66 businesses. She said the subcommittee decided it was at a good point to wrap up and present the initial findings along with the market analysis. Ms. Turell said one objective is to strengthen relationships and be sure that businesses owners know that town staff and this committee are interested in them and in supporting them. She said a second objective is how we the data can be most effectively used in developing the Master Plan and in making the changes that will strengthen the business community and fulfill the goals of making Durham the vibrant place it can be.

She said the members have received an initial draft report as well as survey results and these will be available online in two weeks. Ms. Turell said the subcommittee is still receiving surveys.

Yusi Wang Turell said one purpose of the project was to reflect the richness of Durham's businesses – not just student services and not just downtown. She said the public perception of Durham is as a one dimensional business community; but this is not reflected in the full list of businesses that the subcommittee reached out to; noting that only 1/3 are retail and hospitality businesses.

Doug Clark asked if the data from the surveys for each business would be able to show how dependent they are on students for business. He said knowing what percentage of non-retail, hospitality businesses cater to residents, and what percentage of retail and hospitality businesses cater to residents might show what opportunities are available to businesses.

Yusi Wang Turell reported that two owners lease to more than 10 businesses and 9 other property owners lease to more than 3 businesses. She said the results show that many business owners expected a 9 month business calendar, but did not expect a 7 month calendar which is what actually occurs when winter break and other breaks are taken into consideration. She said 40% of the businesses surveyed belong to the Durham Business Association. Ms. Turell noted the big businesses outside of downtown and the small individuals do not belong to the association. She reported that this project helped determine what businesses are located in town. Ms. Turell said that through this project they were able to add 18 businesses to the DBA list and remove 14.

Ms. Turell said a good number of business owners said they were UNH alumni or moved here for the school system, they also noted the natural beauty and history of Durham, as well as the affluence of a university community as being an influence in their decision making process. She said this underscores how important it is for Durham to maintain its strength and help for the commercial businesses to thrive and survive.

Ms. Turell said a striking finding of the survey was how uninformed business owners say they are about potential economic development projects. She said the Committee needs to keep the community informed. Jim Lawson said he was surprised at this finding despite how much information has been disseminated. He said he thought some of the economic development projects had been well publicized to the community and noted he is not sure how to remedy this.

Ms. Turell said she feels the information should be presented as the business owners have stated it and not present it with too much interpretation. Doug Clark said some recommendations will come from this information; issues like the communication problem will need to be addressed and a conclusion recommended.

Tom Elliott said one conclusion he would draw is that if businesses are upset about a policy the first question to ask is if they fully understand the policy and its intent. He said much of what is being done is complicated and as the members have needed to educate themselves, the community business owners may need to be educated.

Ms. Turell said Durham has a reputation for not being business friendly. Doug Clark said Durham tends to interpret codes strictly and with little flexibility. Ms. Turell said there is some reality in the reputation and some instances being overblown and held on to for a long time. She said there is a reputation of projects taking longer and being more expensive, so people tend to go elsewhere. She said there is hope that the reality is changing – but there is still the need to change the reputation.

Tom Elliott said it was striking how many people reported positive things about the town staff as people, but negative about the rules and regulations. He said normally it is difficult to separate the individual from the regulation. Ms. Turell said many interviewees noted they had positive experiences on the individual level.

Jim Lawson asked if it is perceived that the town is unfriendly to businesses currently here or coming to Durham. Tom Elliott said the perception is in the application of the code; so both perspective and current businesses. Jim Lawson noted there are concerns about things other than the code. Susan Fuller said the zoning ordinance is convoluted and complicated, as is the regulatory process. She said she heard one applicant say they had been at 14 meetings with various boards working on their project.

Ms. Turell said there are no incentives and some disincentives toward change. She said it is difficult to make change because of zoning and code enforcement, so it is difficult to make forward progress. Jim Lawson noted that even when changes are made in these areas – for the people who had the issues in the past – it will always be there for them – so it will take time to get people over experiences. Tom Elliott said the friction between property owners and the code is often because the town has an old building and housing stock; so it is to be expected that there will be major issues when renovating.

Ms. Turell said commercial space is hard to find, expensive and of poor quality. She said one reason for this is that student rental is seen as the best use of the buildings. Ms. Turell said the responses show that nearly 60% feel Durham should attract more large-scale business or industry.

Ms. Turell said parking or the perception of lack of parking discourages businesses. She also reported that signage needs to be larger and more visible – Mill Plaza, Jenkins Court and exit off Route 4 specifically.

Ms. Turell reported that many owners considered the ambiance and safety of the downtown. She said some owners were very vocal about students and the unkempt appearance of the downtown. Jim Lawson said some noted that there is parking available in Pettee Brook; but for this to be effective people need to have a safe and interesting walk from those areas to Main Street. He said from the Store 24 parking lot to Main Street is not an interesting or safe walk. Doug Clark said the Store 24 lot is an issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Lawson said a benefit of addressing this issue would be that it would also improve parking.

Ms. Turell reported that the responses regarding community amenities included the need for family friendly dining, a hardware store and a more vibrant downtown. She said some businesses however, doubted if community members would shop locally. Ms. Turell said it is important for Town Councilors and committee members to shop in the downtown area. She said business owners mention this. She said some interviewees suggested a “Shop Local” campaign to help the community show support for local business owners. Tom Elliott said he feels there is a need to profile the psychology and understand why Durham residents are not shopping downtown.

Doug Clark said part of the issue may be cleanliness and the building stock being old. He noted that when a brand new restaurant comes to Durham the residents frequent the restaurant until it

starts to degrade, then residents abandon it. He said he feels the business owners are not only not offering the right product, but they also are not being offered in a space a resident wants to be in with accessible parking. Ms. Turell agreed saying many restaurant owners note their outside is not welcoming to the community. Mr. Clark said refurbishing the downtown is important for it to be a place people want to be in. Jim Lawson cautioned that there is a risk in investing in improvements, if the Town does not have the business owners on board with upgrading their property.

Ms. Turell reported that UNH as a partner is seen as an asset overall. She said some business owners are still upset about Holloway common.

Ms. Turell said the notion of having an individual to assist new businesses through the process was raised. She said some owners had questions about the current business association and if it is as effective as it needs to be in educating and advocating for businesses.

Ms. Turell said the visitation findings confirm that economic development is inextricably tied to overall town health, and each influences the other. Factors like good schools, public amenities, and a viable residential tax base are a cause of affluent customers and business people moving to Durham, yet these factors are greatly affected by economic development and the tax base it can provide. She said responses were made that emphasized the need for Durham to stay attractive to the affluent people that have been drawn to it.

Ms. Turell asked the members if they feel the findings are on point with what they have seen and heard in the business community. She asked if it is the right mix of description, analysis and recommendation that will give an understanding of what the business community feels. She also asked what the best way would be to distribute this information.

Jim Lawson said the conclusions reached are consistent with what he thought they would be. He said there are three classes of conclusions and the town can only impact one set of conclusions. The three classes are: (1) some conclusions can be impacted by the town – signage, parking etc, (2) some conclusions can be impacted by the businesses themselves, (3) some conclusions show that an economic development director who secures for Durham economic development and is provided with a plan to encourage development would be helpful.

Ute Luxem said she asks herself if the committee is representing the town by the steps we have taken towards economic development. She said she agrees that for economic development to be effective for Durham's tax base it needs to happen in spaces besides the downtown. Ms. Luxem wondered if Durham residents are ready for that and if that is what they want. She also noted that it is surprising to see how uninformed businesses and residents are about economic development plans and wondered how to address this issue.

Tom Elliott said he feels the focus should be on what the town and committee can do with the data. He said the results are a little shocking and will spur a conversation. Mr. Elliott said getting the report in a format that is easily communicated and into the hands of the community is important. He said he believes it will be most powerful if it is more reflective of what the business owners said. Mr. Elliott suggesting highlighting the recommendations of the business owners and keeping the focus on reporting what was said and then go into another level to address what we view as coming out of the results.

Doug Clark said manufacturing is unrepresented because it does not exist, he asked how the committee can ensure they get a voice and have an open discussion about how that would fit in. He said there is a misperception that manufacturing is a bad thing for town – because it is dirty etc. – but there are lots of clean types of manufacturing that could come to Durham. He said certain types of manufacturing could fit in Durham, even in the central business district. Mr. Clark questioned how it is possible to make sure they are not overlooked. Jim Lawson agreed saying manufacturing is desirable and can exist almost anywhere that is zoned for business.

Ute Luxem said she feels it would be very helpful for the businesses for the report to include quotes from the owners that highlight what the business owners are feeling. She said it should be made clear that the comments are not the opinion of Economic Development Committee, but a reflection of the findings from the interviews and surveys.

Tom Elliott said he feels this report deserves to be presented in a forum that gets maximum attention – such as a Town Council meeting. Ms. Turell asked if it would be possible to have a Town Council meeting dedicated to economic development issues. Doug Clark cautioned that when presenting this report to the Council it should not take more than 45 minutes – he noted this is only a piece of the research being done.

Tom Elliott suggested a joint Economic Development Committee/ Town Council meeting to discuss the market survey study and have a TIF District discussion. Mr. Clark said such a meeting could be a special Town Council meeting, but said the EDC should be well prepared for such a meeting with the Council.

Ute Luxem asked what would be the best means to communicate the information back to the community. Tom Elliott said one way would be on DCAT during a special meeting. Susan Fuller suggested presenting the results to the Durham Business Association. Tom Elliott noted that the annual meeting is in April and said it may be time to produce a product that can be handed out and left behind. Ms. Turell said having individuals who interviewed business owners follow-up with them would be helpful. She also noted that the information will be posted on the website.

Malcolm McNeil thanked Ms. Turell for the report. He noted that a similar report could have been issued 10 or 20 years ago. He said he feels it is not enough to report findings. He said it is the duty of this Committee to propose what to do about the situation and make a recommendation to the policy makers so they can make a decision. Mr. McNeil said if this body does not drive economic development nobody will.

Tom Elliott said it is the intention of the committee to take the fact-finding data and turn it into an economic development plan.

Malcolm McNeil said he feels it is important to convince policy makers that there are others ways of approaching growth. He suggested the message needs to be at the highest level and in a forceful way. He said others who do not want change frequently mute out voices of change.

Ms. Turell said she thought it would be good to have an economic development session with the Town Council and to have a forceful vision and strategy to galvanize that type of conversation.

**VI. Committee & Staff Roundtable** – Brief updates on current and proposed developments, zoning changes, Master Plan and other planning initiatives, Town Council activities, broadband initiatives, parking planning, and brief subcommittee reports as needed.

Jim Campbell reported on Planning (quick fixes, master plan etc):

Masterplan: He received the full report from the forum held on January 28<sup>th</sup> and will distribute this shortly. He said the Survey subcommittee is working on the survey and made great progress at the last meeting. He said he is hoping to be able to send the survey to the Planning Board for the meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> and then move forward.

Commercial core strategic plan zoning changes: He said some meetings were canceled because of snow and the consultant being ill.

Market Analysis: He said he sent DCI additional information regarding acreage and map lot numbers. He said they are looking at developable areas outside of downtown and is hoping to have a response by end of the week.

Mini-Charrette regarding fire Department/parking garage will be held on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm in the Town Council room.

Traffic models and safety: He said the first development traffic model with the Capstone proposal was done and went well. He said they have started work on what would be needed for a one-way to two-way transition. He reported they have the information they need and will move forward and run two separate models; one as a no build and a second including long term projects (parking garage etc) factored in. He said they are hoping to have those around March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Elliott asked Mr. Campbell if he had heard any news regarding the development of the grange. Jim Campbell said he knows that the potential developer met with historic district committee. Susan Fuller reported that the Committee recommended the Town sell the grange. Tom Elliott said the recommendation was to sell the grange and allow it to be moved flush with Main Street and allow development behind the building. He said that because of this recommendation the Town Administrator and the developer are beginning a new discussion.

Tom Elliott asked if the writing of the economic development tax stabilization chapter would begin after the survey is complete. Mr. Campbell said the writing of the tax stabilization chapter would not begin until the survey is complete.

Captstone Development: Mr. Campbell said the Planning Board closed the public hearing and will begin deliberations on the 9<sup>th</sup>. He said there was a rehearing request from the Zoning Board of Adjustment in January.

Other: Mr. Campbell said there is an application for a site plan reuse of Hickory Pond as an elderly care facility and there will be a public hearing regarding this on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Jim Lawson reported on parking. He said the final parking management plan has been provided and the staff is reviewing it. Mr. Lawon said the report contains the before and after picture of Pettee Brook Lane. He said he felt this shows just how impressive a change could be.

Tom Elliott said he would be attending the mini-charette and asked if any other members would be attending. Ute Luxem, Doug Clark, Jim Campbell and Jim Lawson all said they would be attending.

Doug Clark said he feels what the Committee is doing is vital because he feels the Town may be headed toward a fiscal crisis. He noted that the retirement subsidy from the State is being reduced, school aid will be reduced 20% along with other reductions. He said he feels a discussion is needed to discuss ways to pay for the added costs and projects. The members discussed the burden of the price of building a public library, the loss of property tax funds due to some possible tax abatements to some of the bigger property tax payers in Durham. The members all agreed that economic development needs to be increased.

Tom Elliott reported that the Energy Committee received one response to the RFQ from Revolution Energy. He also reported that there is a new proposal which may have a strong impact on downtown Durham regarding safe pedestrian and bike routes. He said this involves a proposal to make significant changes to the ways cars approach downtown from Churchill and parking on Madbury Road. Mr. Elliott said this addresses a need that was stated in the questionnaires.

Jim Lawson said the summer would be a good time for a trial change to the way traffic approaches the downtown. He noted that some parking spaces on Madbury Road are under utilized and that there is capacity on the other side of the road for parking. He said this could create more parking spots along Madbury Road. Mr. Lawson said part of the plan would be part energy and part bike and school safety. Jim Campbell said the Traffic Safety Committee feels this proposal goes well with the Safe Routes portion of the school grant that the Town is considering. He said he feels there is good synergy with the Energy Committee.

Jim Campbell noted there is a changing of attitudes at the State level and said if certain State Bills are passed it may mean a change in the 10 year State plan; which may mean the loss of several projects which involve Durham.

The Committee had a five-minute break – 8:51 pm to 8:56 pm

## **VII. TIF Districts** - Continued discussion of a potential TIF District for the Central Business District.

Tom Elliott said that the EDC was given a presentation in January, which lead to a discussion regarding the idea of establishing a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district in the downtown area, and the benefits and limitations of this idea. He said that he and Doug Clark agreed to brainstorm on what ways the money could be used to benefit the Town. Mr. Elliott noted that they believe they know what ways the money might be best spent on, but have no specific plan. He said he has researched and read about other towns and their uses of TIF districts and concluded that it is not unheard of, but it is unusual to ponder a TIF district before having a specific project, developer etc.. Mr. Elliott explained there is some precedence for thinking of the TIF district as a “savings account”. He noted the town of Peterborough had a similar situation and created a TIF district with a big vision but with no specific intentions. Mr. Elliott explained that Peterborough wanted to spend money on the improvement of their downtown and had some ideas but not a lot of specifics. He said one route the town of Durham could take is to be general and then get more specific once TIF money is collected. Mr. Elliott said this could be established quickly. He said the other option is to get specific about programs and plans that may or may not be a top priority in 8 or 10 years from now.

Jim Lawson said when he looked at TIF districts in New Hampshire, the one that caught his attention was Peterborough. He said their process did seem to mitigate the perceived risks of the TIF – because their idea was as you develop and build a bank account – you pay your bond as you go – in terms of Durham, there is a possibility that people may be more comfortable with that concept. Mr. Lawson noted that Peterborough had a rigorous process to follow which included an advisory group, approval at Town meetings – but this process allowed priorities to change and evolve. He said he saw many things about their TIF district that he liked.

Doug Clark said he has no problem with creating a TIF district for the improvement of the downtown, but feels it should be for real infrastructure. He said he would like to see enough money generated to make a real change to the downtown; such as changing the lay out and making it more fully developed. Mr. Clark said he believes there may be objection by people if all the TIF funds are invested in the infrastructure. He asked if a portion of the funds from the increased incremental taxes could go to the general fund.

Jim Campbell replied that the TIF district could be set up however the development plan states. Doug Clark said he thought that would be a prudent idea. Jim Lawson noted there is a “sun-setting provision” in the Peterborough plan. Jim Campbell said the development plan is what becomes important.

Yusi Wang Turell said she feels that change in our downtown will come more through changes in Durham’s business reputation and in individual property owners’ improvement and investment choices, than through large-scale infrastructure investment. She reiterated the need for an Economic Development director. Ms. Turell said she is concerned that getting more development downtown and not having it affect individual taxes in the short term will cause worry and hard feelings among the residents.

Doug Clark said an aerial photo of downtown Durham shows the sparcity of downtown Durham. He said this is because of where we have located our roads and not located our roads. Mr. Clark said side streets are much more efficient, he suggested adding two side streets saying these two streets could have more store fronts and more parking. He also said a second entrance to the Mill Plaza is needed which would add another side street with rows of shops and parking. Mr. Clark said he feels this will improve the appeal of downtown and create the opportunity to create appropriate density and character. Tom Elliott noted that ultimately the Council will have the ability year after year to reallocate TIF monies as they see appropriate.

The members discussed how the 79E tax exemption for improvements would affect a TIF district. Jim Lawson said he thinks the Council would use prudent judgment when deciding whether or not to grant a tax exemption for a property within the TIF district. Tom Elliott expressed his concern that the two policies may be in conflict of one other.

The members then discussed the pros and cons of having a more general TIF district or having a project based TIF district. Ute Luxem said that unless there is significant work that needs financing she does not see a good reason to have a TIF district.

Jim Campbell noted that if the TIF district is not set up then there is the possibility of no improvements occurring downtown. Ute Luxem said she believes some of the issues can be resolved by putting in form-based code in the downtown area. She said this way the buildings would be built in a specific manner. Doug Clark said he feels the TIF should be used to

implement large plans for the downtown to attract businesses. Jim Campbell noted that sewer and water improvements are needed in the downtown. Doug Clark said the opportunity to buy or trade for the Store 24 parking lot would help with redeveloping the downtown. He suggested focusing on the Store 24 parking lot, Pettee Brook parking lot, the bank area and write a development plan with these areas in mind to be financed by a TIF district.

Tom Elliott suggested building a TIF development plan focused on one specific project – but make it clear that it may be best to use the funds for other projects as well. Yusi Wang Turell said she agreed with Mr. Elliott’s suggestion of an initial project that would allow for future projects.

Tom Elliott asked what the risk would be in establishing a TIF district whose first objective is to support the bonding of the structured parking garage and then change that if needed. Jim Lawson said if a parking structure is the goal, there would need to be a 100% bonded project that can support the TIF and would require a project in development that will be driven by the parking garage and provide enough to cover the bond. He said if there is a statement put in that states if there is not enough support for the structure then another project would be undertaken, that would be sufficient. Tom Elliott noted that if the Store 24 lot is sold or “swapped” the parking would need to be replaced. Jim Lawson said there would need to be a lot of development to pay for a 3,4,6, or 7 million dollar bond. Doug Clark said he does not feel the answer is structured parking, but the answer may be street parking if there are side streets. He suggested spending money on acquiring land and making side streets. Susan Fuller said the Mill Plaza area is a traffic nightmare and the addition of side streets may spur the plaza redevelopment. Tom Elliott said Dover has side streets and has a parking problem. Yusi Wang Turell said when speaking of structure parking versus side streets, the issue is that side streets spur business and therefore demand for parking, while structured parking creates supply for parking – the two projects should not be pitted against each other. She said the parking garage planning has been proceeding without TIF money. Ms. Turell said she is leaning towards having a plan first to establish the TIF district.

Ute Luxem said TIF is usually successful if you have an anchor tenant that has certain demands and certain needs. She said that way they pay for the tax increment and therefore the bonding, as needed, to make the improvements. Ms. Luxem said she feels the Town should wait until there is someone that can function as an anchor.

The members continued their discussion weighing the pros and cons of having parking be the focus of a TIF district. Jim Lawson said a hotel developer would look more favorably at a town with a TIF district already in place. He noted there is the risk of putting in a parking structure without making other changes that there may continue to be a parking problem.

Tom Elliott suggested creating a TIF with the immediate intent being focused on parking solutions as they make sense per project and then public infrastructure.

Tom Elliott said he and Doug Clark would discuss the issue further and bring it back to the members for further discussion next month.

VIII. **Discussion** - Discussion about the Dover, NH economic development structure as presented by Dover Economic Development Director Dan Barufaldi at the November meeting and its potential for Durham.

Tom Elliott asked the members if they still felt a need to revisit this item.

Jim Lawson said he feels at this point, this is something to look at, but feels the focus should be on finding the right person to fill the position of Economic Development Director first. Yusi Wang Turell agreed. She said she feels this is something that should be discussed with the Town Council – explaining how different cities/towns go about their process of economic development. Tom Elliott said he would prefer moving forward with the hiring of an Economic Development Director first.

Jim Campbell expressed his support for the position of Economic Development Director and asked if the job announcement can go out in advance of the process needed to follow to confirm the position. Chair Elliott said he did not believe this was possible. Yusi Wang Turell said the members could begin the process of networking regarding this position. Jim Lawson said it is important to find the right person. Jim Campbell suggested that a person or consulting firm could be hired. Ute Luxem cautioned against hiring a firm, she said a person could be contracted as well as a firm. Chair Elliott asked the members if they want to be working towards the hiring of an Economic Development Director. The consensus of the members was that they do want to be working towards the hiring of an Economic Development Director.

The members discussed the pros and cons of waiting for the marketing analysis before moving forward with this process. Yusi Wang Turell said the market analysis will be helpful in matching skills identified in the analysis with the skills needed by the Director. Jim Campbell said the Town Administrator wanted them to have a specific task for the Director to focus on and said the market analysis would point out what that would be. Doug Clark agreed, saying there is no point in hiring a Director if there is no strategic direction for them to use as a starting point.

Tom Elliott suggested it is time to move forward with the process. Doug Clark suggested the next meeting focus on structure, job description and how the Committee wants to make a request to the Council.

**IX. EDC Committee Review** - Discussion of the structure, positions, work, how the EDC can adjust and improve, and the need to elect a Vice Chair.

Tom Elliott reported that the Committee will be losing Doug Clark as the Council representative and expressed his hope that Jim Lawson would be able to fulfill that role. He said these moves still leave another vacant seat and noted there is a perspective candidate to fill the current open seat.

Tom Elliott said the Committee also needs to discuss Chairman and Vice Chairman positions. He said he is happy and willing to continue serving as Chair if the members wish him to, but a Vice Chair is still needed and a discussion regarding subcommittees is also needed.

Additional Note: Jim Campbell said that on March 8<sup>th</sup> the Kostas will submit an application to request that a fifth floor be allowed in their project.

**X. Next Agenda and Assignments** – The next meeting date was set for Monday, March 28, 2011.

## **XI. Adjournment**

*Susan Fuller MOVED to adjourn the February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Durham Economic Development Committee meeting at 10:15 pm. This was SECONDED by Jim Lawson and APPROVED unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Lucius, Secretary to the Durham Economic Development Committee