

Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes 08/18/2014

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Sharon Rossi

August 18, 2014

Members present: JMoran, NNickerson, AWood, PRenaud, JFletcher

Attending: Andre Garron, UNH Cooperative Extension, Regional Economic Development Specialist

7:00 p.m. PRenaud called the meeting to order.

AGarron handed out folders containing economic and labor market information for Greenfield, along with a demographic profile of the town. He advised that he uses a program by Headwaters Economics which gives a good landscape for our community. He asked that the committee read the report and contact him if there are any questions. He asked a question about the vision that EDAC has for Greenfield. PRenaud said that the Vision Statement in the Master Plan was updated in 2012. PRenaud also commented that in conjunction with SWPRC, a new chapter on economic development, separate from the Vision Statement, will be in the 2014 Master Plan. SWPRC is doing a report on the talent and labor pool in our town. One of the major proposed outcomes from the assistance of UNH and the State will be the development of a broadband action plan for the town. This will likely be incorporated into the Master Plan Economic Development chapter.

AGarron said nurturing of the cottage industries in our town is something that EDAC might pursue. He said a study done by the American Planning Association looks at economic development and planning, and with Greenfield being a beautiful community, what can be done to keep the younger generation in the community? The most commented items are: a safe community, walkability in the community, things to do in the community. In the report, the age demographic shows what is typically happening in NH towns: they are losing the younger generation. Skilled talent is in large demand all across the state.

The toughest issue that each community faces is housing, which is expensive, so the younger generation, 20 & 30 year olds, live wherever they can because their jobs don't pay enough to buy a home. The Millennials are having children later, purchasing houses later, etc. as they have to establish their base of operations which now happens in the urban locations.

Broadband is going to be key issue when developing the infrastructure in Greenfield. As you are looking at the big picture for Greenfield for development, looking at the graphs on the last page of the report will help you focus on what area should be addressed first. He said in giving this information to the committee, it will be very helpful for doing the economic development chapter in the Master Plan.

PRenaud said by the September meeting we should have some preliminary results from the survey. By the October meeting, everything will be compiled and analyzed and available to the UNH committee.

JMoran complimented AGarron on the information presented. AGarron said in giving you this information it will help you decide where you want the town to go.

AGarron asked about the limited sewer and water systems. It was said that a municipal sewer system is located in the center of town which services about 20 houses. NNickerson said there is no municipal water system. There is a lot of groundwater, but no public water system which is a major issue in getting new business in Greenfield.

JMoran commented, "We sit on a high quality aquifer under this area, but the issue is that it is untappable for industry and this is a major discouragement to a company that would like to invest here."

PRenaud said he is going to share AGarron's information with the Planning Board because of the quantity and quality of his report.

7:57 p.m. Approval of Meeting Minutes for July 21, 2104. PRenaud said there is one typo which he will correct. He then asked the committee if there were any other corrections. None were noted. PRenaud motioned to accept the minutes as amended.

JMoran seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor.

Finalization of survey: PRenaud said the survey needs to be finalized tonight. He also handed out a copy of the poster for finalization. He advised that there will be no paper surveys at the dump, because there are not enough hours open at the recycling center, plus weather would require waterproofing of boxes. The electronic survey will be on the town website, and possibly on the library link as well. PRenaud will be talking with the school to see if the survey can be handed out to students or teachers. He will briefly speak at the charrette about this and hopefully will be able to get people attending the charrette to fill out the survey. He's hoping for at least 200 responses in all.

NNickerson said he would construct the survey boxes and have them ready by September 3 (boxes for 4 sites are needed).

Minor grammatical and punctuation changes were made to the survey. The word Internet will be capitalized through the survey. JMoran motioned to accept the survey as corrected. NNickerson seconded. Vote unanimous in favor.

Live Free and Start Advisory Council

JMoran read a news article about the Live Free and Start Advisory Council. He said the stated purpose of this committee is: looking to make it easier for entrepreneurial start ups to begin their business. The Council was formed in July by the governor. It is comprised of 15 business leaders from all regions of the state, plus one law professor. PRenaud said a meeting took place at Plymouth State University on August 5 and the major issue that was discussed was the lack of broadband availability in rural areas of the state. Other stated goals of the Council are ways to better market the state, simplifying the convoluted business tax system, and ways to reverse the lack of retention of the Millennials workforce. JMoran talked with Professor Orcutt, member of the Live Free and Start Advisory Council, and relayed the mission of our EDAC. It was noted that the EDAC and Live Free and Start share many of the same goals. He explained how we are in a dilemma concerning broadband and Professor Orcutt is going to tell his council about us. The Council has yet to consider whether to partner with any local or regional EDACs. PRenaud said that Professor Orcutt has co-written a paper on the various ways to build economically viable communities.

Charrette: PRenaud advised EDAC members that they should be receiving an invite to the community supper on September 26 from 5:15 – 6:15. PRenaud reviewed the tentative charrette schedule for the two days, Sept. 26 & 27. He is encouraging members to attend if they can. It will be a good opportunity for all residents to have a civil discussion on a vision for the village center as well as the future direction of the town.

PRenaud received an e-mail from KDay about a new net metering company in NH. He said net metering would allow a homeowner to be an electric power host and sell the power to others. The NH legislature passed the net metering bill last year. The host would receive either an annual lease payment or a reduction in their electricity costs. The information came from NH Solar Gardens. This is something town officials could soon be promoting.

9:20 p.m. Adjournment

JFletcher motioned to adjourn. JMoran seconded. Vote unanimous in favor.

