

**Economic Development Advisory Committee
May 10, 2010**

Attendance: Present were members Eric Stanley, Gus Leraudeau, Arthur Bouffard, Bill Hutwelker and David Cairns. Also present was Bill Fenton, Fenton Family Dealerships and Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Vice-chairman Gus Leraudeau.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting. The committee approved as written the minutes of their meeting of April 12, 2010. Stanley advised he had talked with Nesbitt suggesting she contact the chair.

That evening's guest, Bill Fenton (Fenton Family Dealerships), met with the committee sharing his experiences and views regarding economic development in Swanzev. Mr. Fenton has operated his business in town for 30 years initially in a smaller location along the northern portion of Route 12 (at the location occupied by Sam's today). Today it has expanded significantly at several locations on the southerly portion of Route 12. He reviewed his experiences with the land use process in Swanzev and a neighboring community when he initially looked to expand in the late eighties and as he has developed and expanded his business in our town. He felt he would not have been as successful in expanding his business if he had not initially made the decision to locate in Swanzev (v. the other town under consideration). The land use process and its rules and requirements have been clear and participants in the process are consistent (town staff and boards) in their messages about the process and requirements. His experiences with Swanzev, as compared to others involved in dealership development in other locations across the county, have been positive and pro-business. Of course, as he had developed properties in town, there have been concerns from neighbors or issues that have had to be address, but he feels that the land use boards have been equitable and cooperative in the manner in which they have conducted business. They have allowed neighbors to feel as though they and their concerns are important. Committee members queried Fenton's views regarding how to position Swanzev as attractive to business. Fenton felt Swanzev had a lot to offer (developable land, good access, etc) and a business friendly environment. Developing an identity and tag line promoting those attributes – potentially through national or regional business associations may be an option. The group discussed whether a Swanzev business association might be worthwhile. Fenton advised he had always had a good rapport with the town and that generally his business contacts in our community reported positively. Fenton thought EDAC should not get involved in promotion of individual businesses. The town can help with efforts to expand, but promotion of a business is best done by that business. Ideas about various tag lines – “business friendly”, “largest developable town in Southwest NH”, “best opportunity for business” were kicked around. Developing an illustration contrasting developable land in Swanzev v. neighboring towns was discussed. Whether lack of a downtown handicapped Swanzev was discussed. Fenton thought it did for small retail but not for other commercial/manufacturing uses which are really the target of the town's efforts. Members thanked Fenton for his willingness to take the time and share his perspective.

Fox updated members on the web site project which was delayed by desire to incorporation a photo of the new welcome to Swanzev sign just installed. That photo is now in hand and the update project should be wrapping up.

Business program by DRED. Information about an upcoming business program being conducted in Winchester by DRED aimed at municipal officials and manufacturing businesses was reviewed

with committee members. Assistance in making officials and appropriate businesses aware of the session was requested by DRED. Members suggested sharing the information on the session with AB Tech, Moore Nanotechnologies, Warner Tool, Triikeenen, Tree Free, Mold Pro, Melanson and Port-a-lite.

Members were advised that the Market Basket Grand Opening was set for May 12th.

The next meeting of the group was set for June 14, 2010 at 5 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox
Town Administrator