

Economic Development Advisory Committee
June 14, 2010

Attendance: Present were members H. Gregory Johnson, Eric Stanley, Gus Lerandeau, Arthur Bouffard, Bill Hutwelker and David Cairns. Also present was J.B. Mack, Southwest Region Planning Commission and Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Vice-chairman Gus Lerandeau as Chairman Johnson advised he may be required to leave the meeting early.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting. The committee approved as written the minutes of their meeting of May 10, 2010.

Economic Development Meeting, Winchester Town Hall - June 1, 2010. Members attending the meeting – Lerandeau, Johnson and Bouffard – reported to the group on the meeting moderated by Senator Kelly which included a host of state officials involved in economic development issues. Issues reviewed included a community's web site, having a friendly welcoming demeanor with businesses expressing in your town and paying attention to the needs of existing businesses (not focusing just on recruitment). Municipal water and sewer is viewed as gaining importance to businesses looking to expand or re-locate.

Southwest Region Planning Commission – Brownfield Program. J.B. Mack met with the committee providing an overview of planning commission and the services provided. Opportunities available under the Brownsfield Program were reviewed. Grant funding for site assessment work on abandoned, underutilized, or vacant properties with either real or perceived contamination can be available through this program. Through provision of a site assessment, knowledge of the conditions of a property can serve as a catalyst for its re-development. J.B. Mack reviewed with the committee a specific property which the program was interested known as the Brnger property on Route 12. Some of the history of this parcel was reviewed. NHDES has been working with the owner to address contamination issues on this site estimated at 7 or 8 acres. Other issues of concern with the property include tax interest, zoning and the railbed right of way which runs between the property and Route 12.

With the town's support, a obtaining funding for site assessment work (which might allow the owner to re-sell the property) is possible. Or such site assessment might serve as a catalyst for the town taking a more direct role in a property or even determining that the risk was low enough to take tax deed and then compete for clean up funds which are available to communities and non-profits.

Members queried whether the town could withhold land use approvals for parcels requiring clean up.

The need for owner interest in participating in the program was discussed. J.B. advised he was in discussions with the current owner of the Brnger property.

Members thanked J.B. for the information advising they would consider what recommendations they might make to Selectmen regarding this program and the Brnger property.

Members discussed conducting a mailing to communicate with the town's business community about the committee, encourage feedback and serve a tool to clean up the business list. If a favorable response is not received from the list vendor, staff will consider including this project in the summer work plan.

Cairns reported that "Creation in Stones" radio ads featured the business location as Swanzey. Recent developments along Route 10 (north), particularly Market Basket, were noted

as having raised the aesthetic bar for business development along this highway. The importance of community curb appeal was discussed. Concern was expressed that the Route 10 curb appeal (from south of Sawyers Crossing Road to the Winchester T/L) needs attention.

Members requested letters be prepared for the committee to send to Market Basket (and perhaps Moore Nanotechnologies) welcoming them to town.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox
Town Administrator