

Town of Swanzev
Economic Development Advisory Committee
April 13, 2009 meeting

*Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Committee.
Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly
scheduled meeting of the Committee.*

Attendance Art Boufford, David Cairns, Bill Hutwelker (arrived at 5:14), Greg Johnson, Gus Lerandeau, Mary Ryan (arrived at 5:07), Eric Stanley.

Town Administrator Beth Fox, Town Planner Sara Carbonneau, Glenn Page (Planning Board chair), Victoria Reck Barlow (Open Space Committee chair), and Jeanne M. Thieme (Swanzev businesswoman; Open Space Committee and Planning Board member) also were present.

Call to order Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Planning Board update The group reviewed Carbonneau's report. Agenda items for the April 16 Planning Board meeting include:

- Public hearing: Demoulas Super Markets' retail development site plan review
- Public hearing: multi-tenant applications for Elizabeth Hutchins (sale of antiques at 209 Monadnock Highway -- Pete's Auto Center Building)
- Public hearing: Ronald Johnson (automotive repair at 67 California Street -- Chabott's building).
- Review of application for completeness: Jeff Sevene's site plan application for an excavation and construction service business located at 140 Pine Street.

Motion to accept the report by Cairns. Second by Stanley. All in favor.

Response to EDAC invitation Members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee received the following e-mail invitation from Chairman Johnson:

Our committee is working towards an update of what the committee has accomplished and we intend to meet with the selectmen at our June meeting. Your committee input would be greatly appreciated as we begin to bring into focus what we have been challenged to do. You can read our assignment by visiting the Swanzev web site and clicking the EDAC link.

Johnson acknowledged receipt of a 3-page memo sent by e-mail to EDAC members from Barlow on behalf of the Open Space Committee (OSC). Barlow briefly highlighted a few key points of the OSC response; group members agreed to discuss the memo at the May meeting. Distributing invitations, Carbonneau encouraged EDAC members to attend the April 21 OSC easement celebration party at the Keene State College Camp on Wilson Pond.

Johnson invited Page to respond to the EDAC's invitation to comment. Page said that the Planning Board historically has been supportive of economic development. He described how the tax increment financing (TIF) district, encompassing the Industrial Park, airport, and parcels in that vicinity on Route 32, is designed to encourage economic development, and said that engineering is in place to extend public water and sewer service to Route 12. Fox said that it is possible for a municipality to establish more than one TIF, so long as the town does not exceed a certain percentage of land in that use.

Fox and Page estimated that enough space remains in the approximately 115-120 vacant acres of the Industrial Park for construction of approximately 6 to 8 additional buildings of a size similar to that of Moore Nanotechnology, LLC. Page said that development of some sites might require State wetlands permits.

The group discussed compensatory wetlands mitigation, and the permit review process undergone by Moore Nanotechnologies, LLC. Carbonneau explained that the project's 1.6-acre wetlands impact triggered the State requirement for compensatory wetlands mitigation, and said that the developer had obtained a wetlands permit in under three months. Johnson said that Jim Phippard (Brickstone Masons) had told him that obtaining the permit had gone extremely fast. Johnson said that he hoped other builders would understand the possible necessity of compensatory wetlands mitigation, going into a project. Carbonneau said that the DES rules had been revised several years ago, perhaps creating some confusion at the onset of the Moore Nanotechnology development. Barlow said that the OSC stands prepared to respond quickly with assistance when future proposals require off-site compensatory wetlands mitigation.

Page said that, at the request of the OSC, the Planning Board recently established a working group to reconsider the zoning map, particularly in the vicinity of the Commercial-Industrial district on Route 10. The group will explore creative options for encouraging economic development that, at the same time, protect the rural character of the corridor. Page said that the Whittemore Farm subdivision may offer a suitable model for how to minimize the number of curb cuts on Route 10, and direct more development to feeder roads. Page spoke of the town's historic industries, saying that a resurgence of industrial development may occur now that much of Keene is built out. Page and Carbonneau said that all those with interest are welcomed to join the working group.

Page said that Town wastewater treatment facilities have capacity to process additional sewerage. Public water supply is more limited. Fox said that the hydrant system of the privately owned water system in West Swanzey is not designed for fire suppression; Page noted that it is possible to engineer sprinkler systems using storage tanks with pumps.

Speaking as the owner of a home occupation, Thieme said that the students, artists, and art collectors who visit her studio regularly comment on "what a gem" the town is. She spoke about OSC efforts to promote the town's rural character, including the use of oxen (ranging from signage to plush toys) as symbols of rural character. She said that small businesses like her studio and 24 Carrots Farmstand attract commercial activity from throughout the region and beyond. She said that support for small business owners could translate into promotion for larger businesses, and help to inspire larger business owners to move to Swanzey. Thieme suggested the development of a directory listing list stores, art galleries and businesses, and encouraged the EDAC to consider establishing a chamber of commerce.

Ryan concurred, noting that the EDAC charge directs the group to find ways to support all businesses -- in addition to industry -- that currently exist in Swanzey. She said that the business community will notice if the Town takes good care of existing Swanzey businesses. In lieu of immediately developing a Swanzey chamber of commerce, she suggested that the EDAC make use of the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce, on a trial basis, for six months to a year. Ryan said that a strong Internet presence is critical.

Those present discussed establishing a business directory, updating existing lists (most likely by telephone). Stanley said that such a directory could help citizens think of Swanzey businesses as their first choice, saying that the success of existing businesses will inspire new ones to come to town.

Carbonneau spoke about the need to have a strong Swanzey identity, and get outside of the bedroom community niche. She said that larger businesses require conveniently located support businesses, such as a bank, print shop, and restaurants that are open for lunch. Ryan said that the

town's unique attributes should be the focus of efforts to promote Swanzey. Barlow recommended that the EDAC build on OSC efforts to promote Swanzey's identity as a town with rural character. Boufford encouraged the group to view Swanzey's proximity to Keene as a positive attribute.

The group agreed to establish a subcommittee, led by Ryan, to develop ideas for how to support smaller businesses. Cairns and Stanley expressed interest in taking part.

May meeting agenda items Johnson acknowledged receipt of an EDAC status report and recommendations, prepared and sent by e-mail to group members by Ryan, and said that the group would consider Ryan's ideas at the May meeting.

Johnson said that he hopes to schedule Mary Ann Kristensen (Hannah Grimes Center) and Eric Smith (planner, Southwest Region Planning Commission) to speak for about 20 minutes at the May meeting.

Consideration of minutes Correction, proposed by Cairns: **Next meeting:** 5:00 to 6:00 on ~~April 12, 2009~~ April 13, 2009 at Swanzey Town Hall.

Motion by Boufford to approve, as corrected, the minutes of March 9, 2009. Second by Stanley. All in favor.

Next meeting 5:00 to 6:30 (and possibly somewhat later) on May 11, 2009 at Swanzey Town Hall.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Lerandeau. Second by Boufford. The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Barlow
Recording Secretary