

**Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire**  
**Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2015**

*Note: 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.*

**Call to Order:**

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Steven Bittel.

**Committee Members Present:** Chairman Steven Bittel, Greg Johnson, Guy Pronesti, Lynn Rust, Beverly Bernard, Don Skiba, Arthur Boufford, Guy Pronesti and Alternate Bill Hutwelker.

**Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Planning and Community Development Director Sara Carbonneau, Town Administrator Michael Branley

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** September 14, 2015 were considered. Skiba **moved** to accept the minutes of September 14, 2015, seconded by Boufford and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Proposed Kinder Morgan Pipeline**

Bittel spoke about regional power costs potentially lowered by the presence of the proposed pipeline. He referred to an article from the Wall Street Journal regarding the detrimentally high costs of power in Northern New England, which is high as compared to other parts of the country. Bittel said that he believes that there is both sepecific potential for economic benefit for the region if the proposed pipeline will provide spurs or gas plants which service local communities, and also general potential if the pipeline services regional electric generating facilities. He noted that businesses prefer areas with low cost utilities to lower their cost of doing business and our region has some of the highest rates in North America. Rust spoke about the strategic rationale for pipelines.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Review of presentation by Jack Dugan, President of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)**

Bittel mentioned that MEDC concentrates on not-for-profit organizations. Discussion was held regarding how some of the Entergy funds of \$350,000 were disbursed. These funds were designed to assist five towns, including Swanzey, absorb the loss to their economies by the closure of Vermont Yankee. It was noted that in excess of \$100,000 of the grant was immediately designated for the Keene dump's methane fish and produce venture. Johnson spoke about groups that existed in the past with the purpose if bringing businesses into the area. Johnson spoke about the lack of recruiting being done by neither this organization nor the State of New Hampshire's Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED).

**REVIEW OF CURRENT PROJECTS:**

**TIF District and Safford Drive extension development promotion**

- **Possible Airport Expansion of the TIF District**

Bittel mentioned his meeting with the Dillant-Hopkins airport folks, along with Bill Hutwelker and Sara Carbonneau, and he asked Hutwelker to elaborate. Hutwelker said that the City of Keene Council is

possibly interested in the expansion of the district to cover more of the airport, but this is just in the discussion stage. Bittel said that as long as no bonds are requested to be issued, he would be in favor of the changes that have been discussed thus far. Bittel said C&S Wholesale Grocers has talked about the possibility of building a second hangar for their aircraft. Bittel said that he would like to see EDAC support the effort should the planning come to a viable fruition.

- **Discussion of Renewal of Arnett contract.**

Discussion was held about the possible services that could be provided by Arnett. Discussion included what has been accomplished. Bittel said that Arnett got a lot of key players to the ribbon-cutting ceremony and a bit more attention from DRED, keeping the connection with Concord. Skiba suggested setting up a planning session that might entail more time such as a Saturday or extended Monday meeting. Rust said he would be interested in what other regional towns are doing so there isn't duplication of effort. Johnson emphasized the regional nature of the effort. Bernard mentioned leveraging Keene State College presence. Discussion was held regarding Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) effectiveness. Carbonneau said that they focus on projects other than economic development. Discussion was held regarding needing an advocate at the State level. Hutwelker suggested a two-prong approach: Town Administrator Branley meetings with regional Town Administrators to be informed about economic measures being taken by those towns and also using a local approach. Bittel agreed with the idea of a planning session and the possibility of a consortium of smaller towns south of the City of Keene building an economic development effort together, led by Swanzy. The feeling is that the Chamber of Commerce and SWRPC are not up to the task. It was suggested to include State Senator Molly Kelly at the planning session. Bernard and Carbonneau both also spoke about retaining businesses as being an important aspect of business development, which could be accomplished by initiating conversations with local business people to learn what their needs are and how EDAC can assist them.

#### **2016 BUDGET FOR EDAC:**

Discussion was held about the budget for EDAC. Bittel proposed a base budget of \$3,000 for contracting Arnett, which would include a planning session with EDAC. Pronesti suggested determining a kind of elevator pitch to deliver to each town.

**Motion** by Skiba to request \$5,000 budget, second by Pronesti, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Johnson asked if any portion of the \$5,000 would initially be designated for some purpose and Bittel said it would be \$3,000 for Arnett.

**Motion** by Skiba to set aside up to \$3,000 for 2016 expense to retain Arnett, second by Rust, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

The EDAC members agreed to hold a Planning Session with the idea that Arnett would assist with that session.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

##### **Discussion regarding zoning ordinances and the poor condition of some areas of Town**

Johnson asked for discussion on current zoning ordinances and whether they are being enforced. He noted that State Route 10 looks poorly with clothes on a clothesline on the side of the road, signage everywhere, flags, banners, and auto repair shops. Johnson said it would be good to develop an ordinance to prevent some of these kinds of activities in the future. Bittel noted that if the activity is on the right-of-way, the State might need to get involved. Carbonneau said that the Code Enforcement Officer has a lot to do, and is very busy with life

safety issues. Carbonneau suggested talking directly to the businesses, which might help. Carbonneau noted that the process of legally pursuing violators is time-consuming and she said she believes that conversation with business owners might have a greater ultimate effect.

**Trails and Sidewalks Survey**

Carbonneau noted the Trails and Sidewalks Survey which is being conducted by students at Keene State College. She asked EDAC members to fill a survey out.

Next scheduled meeting: November 9, 2015

**Adjournment:**

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Skiba with a second from Boufford and all were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary