

**Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire**  
**Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2014**

**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, Don Skiba, David Cairns, Arthur Boufford, and Lynn Rust.

**Absent:** Guy Pronesti and Alternate Bill Hutwelker

**Others Present:** Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of October 13, 2014 were considered. Boufford **moved** to accept the minutes, seconded by Skiba and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

**REVIEW OF CURRENT PROJECTS:**

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

- **Signage**– the Committee discussed the estimate of \$1,396.80 for two 4' X 8' X ¾" signs provided by Johnson's Lettering. Discussion occurred regarding where the signs should be installed on NH Route 32 and NH Route 12. Discussion occurred regarding enlarging the green edge of the sign. It was decided by the Committee that Carbonneau and Director of Public Works Lee Dunham together determine the exact location of the installation of the signs. Bittel asked that Planning Board Chair Glenn Page be included in the decision to locate the signs.

**Motion** was made by Cairns to approve purchase of two 4'X8'X3/4" signs from Johnson Lettering at a cost of \$1,296.80 and to post one or both signs this autumn if possible before ground freeze. There was a second by Skiba. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- **Arnett Contract-** A discussion occurred regarding a possible contract with Stuart Arnett with Arnett Development Group, LLC. Arnett provided an email to Bittel, which he shared with the Committee stating the Committee could renew the contract at the "current discounted hourly rate of \$90 per hour." Bittel expressed interest agreeing to the proposed hourly fee and setting a limit for it. Discussion occurred regarding the items that would be included in Arnett services. Bittel mentioned that he would like Arnett's ideas and support for the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Safford Drive Extension in the spring of 2015. Skiba suggested the need for measurable deliverables as to the tasks that the Committee would want Arnett to perform. Johnson suggested using Arnett as needed per hour. It was noted that Arnett wants a retainer of a minimum of 6 hours X 12 months at \$90 + expenses according to the email. Carbonneau said that Arnett does have connections with the appropriate people in development and economic growth sectors. She also agreed that he would be most useful with the dedication ceremony, and also for future activities for the TIF District – such as breakfast business meetings that the Committee might decide to pursue. Johnson said that business developers would be coming in

through contacts with the State of New Hampshire. Arnett could be helpful with his connections with DRED. Cairns also affirmed the idea of having Arnett show deliverables. Discussion occurred about Arnett's work with the towns of Londonderry and Derry. Boufford noted that the rate of \$90 per hour is a discounted hourly rate at renewal of the contract and wondered if that rate might not be available if the Committee did not renew the contract. Bittel said he would contact Arnett and get a determination as to measurable deliverables and whether or not the Committee needs to sign a contract now to continue to receive the \$90 per hour rate.

- **Ribbon-Cutting Event**- Bittel said that the event opening Safford Drive Extension should be in March 2015. Carbonneau said that it is cold in March, and even in April and suggested May as a better date. Johnson asked if you can drive up Safford Drive and the response from Bittel was that there is a barrier but you can walk up the road. Johnson asked about the possibility of putting in street lights, which provides security and gives a more polished look to the area. Bittel said there isn't money available to service a new bond, but there may be some construction reserve funds that could be used after the project is completed. Johnson suggested asking PSNH what the costs would be to have lights. A discussion occurred regarding paying the monthly bills for lights and that SRDD would have to pay those bills. Bittel noted that the utilities are above ground and not buried. Skiba expressed surprise at that information. Johnson asked about the possibility of solar powered lights. Boufford suggested the Board of Realtors can distribute an invitation to the ceremony as outreach to local realtors. Carbonneau noted that a lot of lead time is needed if the Committee wishes to have political folks like the governor attend the event.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Discussion of 2015 projects** – the Committee discussed the following as possible focus for 2015
  - TIF district – sustain interest
  - Boufford said the job of the Committee is to bring new business to Swanzey. Carbonneau said that EDAC has been helpful in generating interest in the Town.
  - Keep existing business folks happy – monthly breakfast idea.
  - Johnson said he hears good things about planning and the permit process, but there are negatives about the Town in terms of the school district and its ongoing divisiveness which the Committee might try to address.
  - Focus on the airport because it is important to business growth.
  - Johnson suggested that lack of sufficient water supply in West Swanzey keeps businesses from locating there. Water is critical for fire suppression which is required by insurance companies. Discussion occurred regarding getting water from the City of Keene. Bittel said the more likely answer is to build a tank and sell water to Keene. Bittel explained that there is plenty of water to provide fire sprinklers, but not fire hydrants, out of the West Swanzey system with relatively minor, incremental improvements. Water distribution is the main problem. Major investment is required to build a water tower. Bittel mentioned the Water Study Committee and the work it has been doing regarding the West Swanzey Water Company system. Skiba said the report from the Water Study Committee will be ready soon. Bittel said a water tower could cost a couple million dollars. Johnson mentioned the possibility of grants – and Carbonneau mentioned that while there are grants available, they often require the Town to take ownership and they are becoming more competitive. Carbonneau also said that she did not think that it would be a priority for the Board of Selectmen because there are other more pressing issues. Skiba said he

spoke to New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the only funds available are federal, not from the State.

- Yale Forest – carving out a chunk of Yale Forest for industrial development across from Market Basket. There was a discussion about a meeting that occurred some years ago which was attended by representatives from Yale and at which a suggestion was made regarding the possibility to carve out an industrial area from Yale Forest on NH Route 10. Carbonneau said Yale folks came to the meetings, but she did not feel that they were necessarily interested in moving forward. She discussed trade-offs that must be considered. Johnson suggested that a proposal might generate interest. Carbonneau said the Yale Forestry School and alumni do not want to see Yale Forest developed, and while she thinks it is a valid idea, this might not be the right time for it. She mentioned that many folks in the community are committed to maintaining Yale Forest.
  - Breakfast – once every 3 months have a business breakfast at Keene State Camp or perhaps a restaurant like the Dinner Table inviting businesses in the area to attend and discuss their business issues. All were in favor of developing this course of action.
  - Rust asked how many businesses have come to town recently – maybe a way to promote the Town with the new businesses – recognizing new businesses which might be done yearly at the end of the year. Bittel agreed and suggested an expanded report of building permits to identify growth. Carbonneau said there is a steady increase of new business over time, sustained economic growth. Carbonneau said she would attempt to gather a report for the Committee. All agreed that this should be a priority.
  - NH Route 12 study –Bittel asked about an update on the report – Carbonneau is on that committee and she said the study group met with the Planning Board and the Selectmen during a planning board meeting a month or so ago. Carbonneau mentioned some of the recommendations from the report. Bittel asked about zoning changes regarding making the business corridor wider. Carbonneau said the study has to do with traffic and did not address the corridor from a business perspective. She noted the final report should be coming out shortly.
- **Other Topics that may be suggested**
    - Bittel suggested the Board of Selectmen need to approve the signage. Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe joined the meeting briefly at 5:56 p.m. and he said he could provide the documentation to the Board. Carbonneau said she would prepare documents to present to the Board including the estimates for the signs.

Next scheduled meeting: December 8, 2014

**Adjournment:**

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Skiba with a second from Johnson and all were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary