

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
Meeting Minutes – January 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, Don Skiba, David Cairns, Arthur Boufford, Lynn Rust and Alternate Bill Hutwelker.

Absent: Guy Pronesti

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Minutes of November 10, 2014, were considered. Skiba **moved** to accept the minutes, seconded by Boufford and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Chief Skantze Update on Proposed Fire Station on Safford Drive

Skantze spoke briefly about the focus group meetings that have been held regarding the proposed Fire Station. He showed a map of town with three concentric circles covered by three fire stations, including one which would be located at Safford Drive. The concentric circles together cover the entire town. Skantze spoke to the ISO rating and how the rating impacts positively on fire insurance rates. Skantze also explained the space within the proposed Fire Station and how the space will be utilized. He also spoke about the capital improvement investments on the West Swanzey and East Swanzey fire stations. Boufford asked about the number of years that the proposed Fire Station would be viable and Skantze responded that the architects infer that the station would have at least a 30 year, if not a full 50 year lifespan. He also said the station has been downsized from the original 20,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet.

REVIEW OF CURRENT PROJECTS:

- **TIF District and Safford Drive extension development promotion:**
 1. **Report on Safford Drive Construction** - O’Keefe updated the Committee on new utility pole installations and wiring along Rt. 12 so that the road should be opened by May 1, 2015. O’Keefe said that New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) helped getting FairPoint Communications to move the utility poles at State Route 12 and Safford Drive.
 2. **Website** - Bittel expressed thanks to Coleen Birmingham, Skiba, and Carbonneau for work accomplished on the website. He noted more work needs to be done.
 3. **Signage** - Bittel spoke about the new sign and said the posts will be stained and have caps. The second sign meant for the State Route 12 entrance to Safford Drive is finished and currently stored at Whitcomb Hall until spring when it can be installed.
 4. **Arnett Contract – Discussion** – an email with a proposed list of deliverables from Stuart Arnett was reviewed by the Committee. Bittel spoke about references to Swanzey business in the local

news and the importance of communication with state-wide organizations. Bittel said Arnett has influence with key personnel at the state level. Skiba suggested that Arnett attempt to have the governor be present in May for the opening of Safford Drive. Johnson said growth is projected to be 0-4% for Cheshire County area by the State Department of Employment Security. Johnson said the County gets little recognition from the State. He suggested part of the answer is to join up with other towns to coordinate for recognition in order to attract businesses to the area. Johnson mentioned the Southwest Region Planning Commission may be a starting point. Cairns pointed out Arnett addresses Johnson's concern in his proposed contract. The Committee agreed that Arnett could be that person for the Town. There was a discussion regarding the efficacy of Southwest Region Planning Commission. Carbonneau suggested that the idea of combining with the City of Keene and other towns might be worthwhile. Bittel suggested that Arnett should be invited to the March EDAC meeting to talk to him about this topic and get some ideas from him. Rust suggested tasking Arnett to create an event for Southwest New Hampshire to address the predicted zero growth rate.

5. **Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony-** Bittel noted that the ceremony is tentatively planned for early May 2015. Bittel mentioned that the ground-breaking was successful in getting significant local and state leaders as well as press in attendance, and that the Committee should begin planning for another ceremony in March.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Review of Annual Report** – the Committee reviewed a draft of a contribution to the Town of Swanzey Annual Report. Bittel asked for comments via email from Committee members.
- **Discussions of possible 2015 Projects** – Three areas of interest were raised:
 1. Sustain interest in TIF district:
 - Bittel suggested a breakfast in connection with the ribbon-cutting ceremony. There was a brief discussion about airport future planning; the City of Keene has filed for regional airport status.
 2. Enhance present Swanzey business contacts:
 - Carbonneau suggested quarterly breakfasts with local business folks to share ideas. Boufford agreed that idea would help maintain the businesses already in town.
 3. Investigate West Swanzey development.
 - Bittel mentioned looking at West Swanzey and the West Swanzey Water Company as one means of promoting development. There was a discussion about water and there being enough for sprinklers, but not hydrants. Skiba suggested looking at State Route 10 for future development. Bittel asked about the viability of cooperative interconnect effort with the City of Keene. There was discussion about needing a tank for water pressure and Skiba said that the City of Keene has tanks, but that water needs to be able to be pumped to them.

A **motion** was made by Skiba to support the proposed Fire Station as an asset to business in the TIF District. There was a second to the motion by Bittel and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Next scheduled meeting: February 9, 2015

Adjournment:

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Boufford with a second from Skiba and all were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary