

**Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire**  
**Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2013**

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

**Call to Order:**

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chairman Steven Bittel.

**Committee Members Present:** Chairman Steven Bittel, Amy Bush, David Cairns, Lynn Rust, and Arthur Boufford. **Absent:** Guy Pronesti, Greg Johnson. **Others Present:** Town Planner Sara Carbonneau, Resident Don Skiba

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of February 11, 2013 were considered. Cairns **moved** to accept the minutes, seconded by Rust, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

**Review of current projects:**

- West Swanzey Charrette update: Carbonneau offered an update. She reported that a Main Street Advisory Committee has been established by the Board of Selectmen for the streetscape and the infrastructure of West Swanzey. They will hold their first meeting March 21, 2013. The Whitcomb Hall Committee is also moving ahead and is trying to get the first floor ready in 2016 when the building will be one hundred years old. The West Swanzey Athletic Association building on Main Street has been purchased by the Town and demolition is in planning stages. She also reported that on March 23, 2013 a get together with young architects from the State of New Hampshire will be held at Town Hall to which the public is invited. Carbonneau noted that the final report from the Plan NH Charrette has been made available to the public. Cairns said he enjoyed the Charrette report and wanted to know who will be following up on it and whether the Planning Board was on board. Carbonneau reassured Cairns.
- Update/revision of EDAC presence on Town website: Bush has completed her work on the Town Annual Report and is now working on the website. She has an action plan for herself for website development. Bittel asked Bush for an update regarding the Town newsletter which will go out in April. He would like to add photos of Stuart Arnett at the last meeting together with an article on current EDAC efforts.
- Bittel asked for views on Arnett's presentation: Cairns said he enjoyed Arnett's presentation which raised issues for the committee to think about. He said he liked the idea of defining the goal of the EDAC more precisely which was something recommended by Arnett. Bush said she thought the presentation was informative. Rust said he liked the marketing plan to focus on the Town's ability and willingness to support new business in our TIF district. Don Skiba offered

that he liked the idea of providing an inventory of what the district consists of, acreage, etc. since he is a newcomer. He said you need to know what you have before you can market it.

### **2013 initiatives – TIF District:**

Bittel spent a few minutes describing a TIF District: TIF stands for Tax Increment Financing and the increment is the difference in the mill tax rate between the date the district was started and the current date. The Increment may be used as debt service for bonds or for maintaining/developing the district.

Bittel distributed a draft Preliminary Action Plan Outline for consideration. Carbonneau said there is an engineer who does property development, permits, surveying, etc., who could generate a map of the District, which is part of the Action Plan. Carbonneau reported that there are about 20 parcels in the TIF district. Some of the parcels are for sale and some are not for sale. Bush asked what the finished product would look like, and would it be public? Bittel said we would first try to build the database. Bush said she would like to see an interactive map on a website.

Cairns pointed out there is a continuum as to where a Town committee can fit into a development plan and the committee needs to know where we want to be on that continuum. Rust said that the other piece from Arnett that he thought was good advice was bringing landowners together to support the development of the area. With a good inventory of the properties the Town can recommend ways to sell the properties. But Cairns asked just how proactive should the Town be with landowners for selling their property. Boufford reminded all that EDAC is only advisory and he thought that the committee should be promoting Swanzey, not individual parcels of land.

Bittel noted that there is a learning process and knowledge and expertise will come in the long run. Cairns talked about the fact that engaging someone to do the inventory work is costly and the committee's annual budget is only \$2,500, which should be enough to get the project moving. Bittel said the committee can go to the Board of Selectmen and request more money, but here also is \$550,000 to use for the TIF district.

Bittel said the Town is beyond the planning stage. Safford Drive Extension will be built this year. He noted that it is easier to take the next step since the road completion will be a reality. Rust said that it appears that the committee will have to get some help if it wants to pursue development. Bittel said that members can add some services and mentioned that fact that Bush has knowledge of the property records of the Town as she is the Assessing Coordinator. He also said that the committee has the support of Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe and Carbonneau. However, we do need someone who has done this before. Rust asked as to Boufford's point about promoting the Town, what other areas of town that can be promoted? Carbonneau mentioned the Yale Forest property as possible development for the future and that other Town committees are also considering this. Bittel repeated that EDAC will gain experience from the TIF project that may be applied to future promotional efforts. Rust pointed out there is very little development land left in the area, especially with water and sewer.

Bittel asked for thoughts from the members on both the Action Plan and the Proposal for Promotion of Swanzey Revenue Development District (SRDD). Carbonneau estimated \$5,000 a fee by an engineer to start the process. Cairns pointed out as an advisory committee the committee is asking the Board of Selectmen to be empowered to proceed. The Committee can report to the Board of Selectmen that this

is the committee's recommendation with specific steps to follow through and that we are prepared to lead the implementation of the plan.

The proposal as written by Bittel was considered, and Rust suggested that Bittel should submit it to the Board of Selectmen if other committee members have not come up with additional comments by Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is Tuesday, March 19, 2013. Bittel will need to complete the form for appointment with the Selectmen by Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> in preparation for that meeting.

Rust made a **Motion** to present to the Board of Selectmen a proposal to accelerate and enhance development of the TIF District, seconded by Boufford, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Bittel and Cairns will both attend the BOS meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>, or later if necessary due to Board scheduling.

**Next scheduled meeting: April 8, 2013.**

**Motion by Cairn to adjourn, seconded by Boufford, with all in favor. Adjournment at 6:05 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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

**Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary**