

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2013

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, Amy Bush, David Cairns, Greg Johnson, Arthur Boufford. **Absent:** Guy Pronesti, Lynn Rust. **Others Present:** Town Planner Sara Carbonneau, Resident Don Skiba, Christian Boysen from Land Solutions, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe.

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

Presentation by Christian Boysen on the Collier property development

Christian Boysen from Land Development firm Land Solutions was introduced to the gathering by Johnson. Boysen provided a synopsis of his background and the planning for the Collier property. Boysen said his firm represents the client's interests with multiple consultants for the development of client land.

He then went on to discuss the Collier property which lies within the Town's TIF district. The Collier piece of land runs along the existing Safford Drive and has frontage on Route 32. Two-thirds of the property is fairly flat, but the land has drainage channels indicating wetlands. The wetlands have been delineated and the surveyor has recorded the wetland edges. Work is being done regarding how best to configure the wetlands for development. After reviewing the shape of the property, the type of soil which affects the foundation, regulatory aspects and market need, Boysen suggested that several smaller parcels might be better marketed than one large parcel at the Collier property.

In response to a question from Bittel regarding the number of parcels one might expect from a 25 acre site, Boysen responded that a property might accommodate three to five parcels for 20,000 to 40,000 sq. ft. buildings with parking lots. In the case of the Collier property, a quarter of the property is on a hill. If they can consolidate the wetlands and can utilize the fill from the hill and build terraces they might attain more parcels.

A brief discussion was held regarding a requirement for buildings to have frontage on a Town road. Boysen said it is likely that an interior road will be conveyed to the Town.

Bittel asked when something would be presented to the Planning Board. Boysen responded that it would be this year (2013). He indicated that his work is entering Phase 2 starting and that he expected it to take 60-90 days. He mentioned that he is working with Carbonneau and that she will be the first to know what steps his firm is taking.

Johnson asked about the acreage in the TIF district. Carbonneau responded that there is about 350 acres in TIF district. Johnson said he thought it important to encourage landowners to hire folks like Land Solutions to learn what of their land is saleable. Boysen completed his contribution to the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and Bush left the meeting at that time.

Selectman Meeting

Bittel reported to the committee that the Board of Selectmen has affirmed the proposal for marketing the TIF zone and Safford Drive extension that Cairns and he presented on behalf of the EDAC.

Report on mapping effort

Carbonneau reported that she spoke to Brickstone Land Use Consultants of Keene about putting together a composite map which would include zoning information, identify property owners and present structures, show known wetlands, property lines, etc. She reported that Brickstone has already obtained much of the information the Town is seeking to combine into a single reference source and that Brickstone volunteered to put together the information on a pro bono basis to the Town so long as their firm is identified on the Plan. Carbonneau recommended to EDAC that the committee accept the generous offer.

Johnson said the Town should be soliciting other proposals. Bittel pointed out that Brickstone had offered to only assemble the input data for Arnett, which is not a consulting role. Carbonneau added that Brickstone would submit the data in the desired electronic format.

Johnson said he thought the Chair was out of order to ask Carbonneau to talk to Brickstone to begin with. Bittel said that he disagreed with Johnson, the Brickstone option had been discussed before the committee and the generous offer should be accepted. Boufford asked if there is any benefit to Brickstone. Johnson interjected we don't have authority to hire anyone. Cairns pointed out a written proposal plan, approved by the Committee at the last meeting was presented to Board of Selectmen, and EDAC does have authority to move ahead. O'Keefe said the Selectmen were very supportive and especially receptive to pro bono work rather than the Town paying for it. O'Keefe offered his opinion that EDAC should jump on the offer right away. Johnson said he thought it is wrong to not offer it to other firms.

Johnson made a **motion** to put out a formal request to other firms for a response to the Town's need for a composite map to make a proposal to this committee with a scope of work. Cairns seconded the motion in order to have a further discussion on the motion.

Discussion: Cairns pointed out the Selectmen have affirmed the plan laid out to them by Bittel. Cairns asked Johnson if he had read the proposal which was delivered to all the members of the committee via email and approved at the last meeting. Bittel gave Johnson a copy of the document. Cairns pointed out that presentation did not ask for a Request for Proposal (RFP), but it did lay out what was being requested. And he also pointed out that the Board of Selectmen affirmed and accepted EDAC's willingness to lead on this. Bittel pointed out that going through a RFP process for a free service, despite being somewhat unique, would greatly delay work. At this point, Johnson withdrew his **motion**, which was seconded by Boufford. No vote was deemed necessary.

O'Keefe recommended that the committee make a motion to accept the offer. Instead, to move matters forward, Bittel asked for a notation in the Minutes that the offer is in hand, and the committee agrees to move forward with it. There was no objection.

Report on Safford Drive construction

O'Keefe had conversations with two abutters regarding Safford Drive extension completion. He reported that in general the Fair Grounds representatives were receptive, but some work has to be done with Clear Water Pool. O'Keefe said he thinks that the permits can get done and work started this summer. The State has reviewed the plans and is in general agreement, but some NHDOT final permits are pending.

Report on retention on District marketing effort

After a review by Bittel and Carbonneau of the proposal from Stuart Arnett it was decided that the better course of action was to first internally assemble the input items, including the contributed mapping, to both save some money for the Town and better focus the outside work. Bittel said that with some assembly of input data to Arnett's proposal may be refined. The revised proposal will then be submitted to the committee, and if the committee approves, it will go to the Board of Selectmen to seek authority to move ahead.

O'Keefe offered that SRDD needs to approve use of their excess tax increment funds to pay for outside services (Arnett). Bittel noted that as a member of SRDD he will bring the motion at their next meeting.

Upon questions from Johnson about Arnett, Cairns pointed out the prior meetings minutes had most of the information from Arnett's presentation. Arnett proposed services are for marketing the District, but he also will provide recommendations for further economic development efforts. Bittel noted that Arnett answered several Committee questions regarding committee involvement in the development process. Boufford asked that the committee not interfere with real estate folks. Cairns assured Boufford that EDAC would not be involved in taking over any real estate sales function.

EDAC Alternate Member

Bittel asked the committee to consider asking the Board of Selectmen to authorize and name an alternate member for EDAC. He pointed out that several times in the past there have been problems getting a quorum because of members being unable to attend the meeting. EDAC needs four members present out of seven members to have a quorum. Cairns asked how having an alternate works. Bittel said the Alternate sits in on discussions and contributes but does not have a vote unless he or she is seated for a member and noted how well it works with several other Town boards and committees. He also mentioned that due to unique travel and business commitments, several valuable EDAC members must miss meetings. Bittel made a **motion** to ask the Board of Selectmen to add an alternate to EDAC, Johnson seconded, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.** O'Keefe agreed to present at the next Select Board meeting.

Other Business

Bittel mentioned that he has drafted a piece for the upcoming Swanzey Town Newsletter, which is distributed quarterly. He encouraged the members to review the draft EDAC report and make comments this week as the closing date is next Monday.

Motion to adjourn by Johnson, seconded by Boufford. All were in favor. Adjournment at 5:57 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting: May 13, 2013

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary