

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
Meeting Minutes – July 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 5:02 p.m. by Chairman Steven Bittel.

Committee Members Present: Chairman Steven Bittel, Amy Bush, Greg Johnson, David Cairns and Alternate Bill Hutwelker. **Absent:** Lynn Rust, Arthur Boufford, and Guy Pronesti. Hutwelker was seated for Lynn Rust.

Others Present: Town Planner Sara Carbonneau, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe, Resident Donald Skiba and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Minutes of June 10, 2013 were considered. Cairns **moved** to accept the minutes, seconded by Bush and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Presentation by Rich Grogan, Regional Manager, Keene, NH Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

- Discussion of resources available.
- How to better coordinate Swanzey development opportunities.
- website: www.nhsbdc.org

The SBDC has been active since 1984. It exists in 48 states, and provides no-cost business advice to small businesses, similar to professional management consultants. Grogan said that 50% of the businesses they work with are start-ups and 50% are existing businesses. He estimated that they assist about 800 NH businesses a year and raise \$20-\$25 million annually for those businesses.

Much of the work they do is through referrals working with banks, lawyers and accountants. The SBDC provides access to financing and capital, coaching business owners and entrepreneurs through the process. The SBDC also assists with marketing plans, financial analysis, management issues, record keeping, and establishing metrics for marketing success. Grogan mentioned the interaction with other economic development groups such as the one in Claremont, New Hampshire.

Grogan said that he is interested in small business success in Swanzey. He mentioned that he is currently working with a couple of businesses in Swanzey, but confidentiality limits disclosure of their names. Bittel asked about issues these businesses might have had with the Town of Swanzey, and Grogan said there have been none, but the sample is small. Bittel said that the committee would like feedback on these kinds of issues if Grogan runs into them.

Bittel asked Carbonneau to explain to Grogan what she does from a planning point of view, which she did.

Grogan said it is important to serve the entire region. He offered to be present for a business resource day, allowing interested parties to present their questions.

Cairns asked for the definition of a small business. Grogan said it is defined as under 500 employees. Most of his clients have less than 50 employees. Businesses which are larger can afford the business resources privately. Cairns asked about interaction with Hannah Grimes association. Grogan said he is associated with them and is there one day a week.

Bush suggested that the Town refer to these resources on the Town's website. Cairns talked about an event last year which was aimed at providing business with the latest information about hi-speed internet access. Bittel pointed out to Grogan that Swanzey's Revenue Development District has resources such as hi-speed internet access, water and sewer, appropriate zoning and an airport. Grogan said it is good to know about other locations than Keene.

When asked about money that might be available for small businesses, Grogan said the SBDC has no money to grant to businesses per se, but does offer specific guidance in funding through their network.

Review of current projects:

Update/revision of EDAC presence on Town website:

Bush said the TIF map is up, but it is not interactive yet with Buford's photos of local businesses. Other revisions are in the works.

TIF District and Safford Drive extension development promotion:

O'Keefe responded that the best option right now appears to be a start in the autumn with much of the project work being done in the winter. Final deals with abutters remain open.

Bittel discussed Stuart Arnett's meeting with Carbonneau and him on July 3, 2013. Three major points were discussed:

1. Branding/marketing message – with the idea of making the district unique.
2. Coordination with DRED, et al, to get the district listed and more actively marketed.
3. General marketing media, including website, printed, and referral.

Carbonneau added that Arnett wants to talk to some of the local business owners in the area about positives they have experienced and concerns or issues they have. Bittel said Arnett ideas will be presented to the committee at the September meeting.

Cairns asked about the Town emails. Carbonneau responded that the process of providing email

accounts is moving ahead slowly until some issues are worked out.

Other Business

- Recognition of Amy Bush's service.

Next Scheduled meeting: September 9, 2013

Motion to adjourn by Bittel, seconded by Cairns. All were in favor. Adjournment at 5:48 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 large initial "B".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary