

Town of Waterboro

Economic Development Committee

Minutes

February 4, 2015

Call to Order: 3:10 PM, by Chairman Leo Binette. Present: Don Holden and Tim Folley members; Lisa Hughes, Ex-Officio Member. Also present: Town Planner Tom Ursia, Sel. Dennis Abbott, 20/20 Chm. Bob Powers and guest: Sharon Abbott. Absent: John Wade and Susan Rocray, members and Laurie Warchol, Ex-Officio Member.

Agenda Review and Acceptance: Don made the motion to accept the agenda as written. Tim seconded. Voted, passed.

Minutes: Don made the motion to approve the minutes for the January 13, 2015 meeting. Tim seconded. Voted, passed.

Correspondence: From Sue and Laurie in regards to not being able to attend the meeting.

Announcements: None.

Old Business:

Economic Business Summit held Nov. 21, 2014 – Review of Draft Meeting Report provided by Good Group Decisions: Tom reported that no recommendations or summary would be forthcoming as a facilitator needs to remain neutral in regards to the outcome of the meeting.

Draft Economic Development Chapter for the Comprehensive Plan: Bob passed out a suggested introduction that he put together. Tom passed out a working chapter outline that he put together and felt that the outline and the Summit Report should be worked together to create the ED/CP Chapter. The Committee reviewed his draft outline. He suggests that an annual ‘readiness test’ with Town Officials should be conducted. Also branding and marketing with social media should be looked at, including natural resources and tourism. Leo stated that the Committee will work on the ‘readiness’ for the ED plan and a work plan should be put on the next meeting agenda. Committee agreed to hold a Workshop on Feb. 18th. at 2 PM to work on the ED Chapter. Leo will check with Kerry D’Angelis for business photos that she might have.

Tom stated that the cover also needs to be designed. Bob stated that the Town Adm. has reservations on the ED Chapter due to the number of Action Planning Strategies it contains. The EDC may want to look at consolidating them.

Committee Work Plan for 2015: See above.

New Business:

Current Economic Development Update: Due to time restraints, Tom will report at the next meeting.

ECD Budget for FYE 6/30/16: Leo passed out a suggested budget for 2015-16 totaling \$10K. (Associations & Chambers: \$2,500; Professional Services: \$3,500; Printing: \$2,500; and Advertising, Postage & Mileage: \$1,500.)

Tom feels that \$10K may be inadequate. A Marketing Study for Hospitality could be \$10K, at a bare minimum. Leo noted that the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator believe that businesses wanting to come to Waterboro should conduct their own marketing studies, not the Town. Dennis stated that the Town has not done marketing studies for any other businesses that have come to Waterboro. Dennis also questions what the marketing study would do for the Town and what would be the output. Tom stated that eighteen months from now, due to build-out, the opportunity for hospitality will be null. A marketing study is critical for now or much later – 5 to 10 years out, when the next tier wave comes. A regional study could be conducted. It would be important to know if the bigger national franchises are interested or if the Town should to go with an independent approach such as B&B's, etc. At a future meeting the EDC may want to review hospitality action plans. Leo stated that even through last year's budget request received no support for a hospitality marketing study, it doesn't mean that it can't be asked for again this year.

Dennis suggested adding \$5,000 to professional services. Lisa asked whether the EDC has decided that hospitality is where they want to focus their efforts in the near future. Leo answered no. Tim asked whether the committee's work plan should be done first. Lisa said that if franchise was the direction chosen, they would more than likely do their own study, thereby eliminating the need for the town to do one and incur the expense. Don thinks private investment vs. franchise is the way to go first. Leo asked Tom if a marketing study would fall under the Planning Dept. vs. ED, as Leo feels there should be funding for planning.

Dennis stated that the Board of Selectmen have had a discussion on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. He further stated that the BoS and Town Adm. will need to decide on the requested budgets, what work should be done and how it will be managed. Tom stated that small towns typically don't have planning funds and usually the Town Planner is the ED person. Tim asked if it might be possible to hire a grant writer. Tom stated there are no grant monies available. Motion by Don, seconded by Tim to accept the budget request as revised for a sum of \$20K, including \$10K for a Hospitality Marketing Study. Voted, passed.

General Discussion: None.

Adjourn: Don made the motion to adjourn at 5 PM. Tim seconded. Voted, passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Holden
Committee Secretary

Approved: March 4, 2015