



Windham Economic Development Committee (WEDC)
Friday, May 13, 2022
Community Development Department - Zoom link provided

Attendance: Kristi St. Laurent, Gary Garfield, Clare Macoul, Lisa Walker, Mitch Jacoby (zoom), Alex Mello – Community Development Director, Donna Morris – Salem Chamber (zoom), Derek Monson – Planning Board Liaison
Mike Oldenberg - public

Call to order at 7:30am

Appointment of alternates for absent members

Theo appointed to George's seat

Committee membership update – G Fredette and C Macoul have re-upped their terms, new regular member James Rondestvedt

Presentation by Village Center District Applicant Chris McCarthy, north-east corner of Hardwood Rd and Indian Rock Road/Route 111

- Started developing this lot 10 years ago. Sees this as the gateway for the overall district
- In review right now by planning board
- Designed to give Main Street feel and provide future connectivity
- Low impact on traffic due to business hours offset with school, they still want to make improvements to the intersection even though it's not required
- Kristi asked if sidewalk could extend down to Hardwood to increase walkability. Chris said he's not opposed to that idea.
- Has not had conversations with the school about overflow parking yet.
- Would be ready to start in September if everything goes well
- Gary asked about water. Wells and septic.
- 100 seats in restaurant, second building 2 story with retail/office. Parking requirements dictation ~150 spots in total. Going for waiver for 144 parking spots. Spots will be handled with cross easement package
- Sound buffering? Using boundaries and landscaping to reduce volume of noise for the neighborhood
- Motion to allow Chair to write a letter in support of the project to the planning board by G Garfield, seconded by C Macoul. Passed 7-0-1 with D Monson abstaining.

Presentation and Q & A with Beverly Donovan, Derry Director of Economic Development

Derry with need for economic development. More technical development – zoning, lot sizing, uses.

Wrote job description – to look at demographics, trends, business needs.

Was head of Chamber in Greater Haverhill

Then went to Derry once the position was funded

Looked at trends and demographics, traffic, housing, location, pricing. What do you think you want, vs what can you really have.

First zone changed was Route 28/Bypass from Robert Frost farm to the Fairways and on 28 over to the old junk yard. Hilly, wetlands, major state roadway (28). Didn't want more pole barns and car lots. Highest and best use balanced with demographics. Form-based code – did hybrid. As soon as that was passed they had several proposals. They have 8 projects in the works now in this new zone.

Crystal Ave is more intense commercial – Tuckaway Tavern, Starbucks, Chipotle. West Running Brook is smaller and more local.

Street light data – traffic study type. They know the volume of cars in a certain area. They know the number of cars that get off the highway and go to Market Basket. Need to know how businesses make decisions –

- Competition location
- Traffic

Buxton uses credit card data for people located in a certain spot – also looks at for stores how many of their customers are from town, from nearby and from far away – and who spends more.

Businesses are doing this work before even engaging with a town or a land owner – leaser. They are looking at housing availability, available workforce.

Not a lot of commercial land yet for ground up development in Derry, have added uses to Industrial. Have large creative community – 6 music schools, theaters, performance venues.

M Jacoby : when businesses come to you do they say either we came to you because you have ABC, or we didn't go to Windham or Pelham because they don't have XYZ.

B Donovan: utilities are expensive to bring to a site. Most sites have water. Sewer is expanding. Like process – come in to talk with Bev, Planning Dept before TRC/more formal process to be refined before it hits official channels.

Feeling that the PB should be the board of yes, the ZBA the Board of No. If it meets all of the requirements the PB feels it should not get in the way – don't bog down with cupolas, plantings – development is expensive enough.

Question of taxes and how to communicate with public. Developers asked to give the numbers – mixed use to provide data of the residential offset by commercial. Also pulled in data from NHHFA, Seacoast Housing, other organizations and the data from the existing landlords in town. Parkland needs affordable housing and market rate (for traveling physicians and therapists). Looked at cost of services to existing projects in town.

New earmarked money by State for WFH. \$100 million. Also HUD and other funding and grants and charitable funds – takes a labor intensive patchwork process.

There are only 8 houses for sale in Derry right now. Very few apartments, and a 2 BR is \$2100/month (not affordable).

TIF funds – for road improvements, may do a parking garage for downtown, utilities underground, other improvements. Has two TIFS, newest is Ash street towards Londonderry.

M Oldenberg – how does Town drive the decision making process? – There are a lot of moving parts.

“Town Council system of government. PB gives zoning to public hearing process with Town Council – within 30 days it can be approved. Lots of opportunity for public input, but do not need to ‘wait until March’”

Talk of K Smith/ Londonderry. Economic development is also regional. Good to keep informed.

M Jacoby asked if Derry used an Economic consultant advisor, was it good? – No consultants per se, did not use for zoning, etc.

Tapped into different organizations in state.

Originally had Buxton for \$50K. The initial info was good, but not really going to change to keep paying \$50K per year. Bought out by CoStar – do radius projections, 5, 10 mi out. They are only \$5K /per year.

Balance is to keep character of town, promote good development.

Looking out for long range, best outcome for all
Committee thanked B Donovan for joining this morning and sharing insight.

Old and New Business:

Greater Salem Chamber has golf tourney at WCC in one month, looking for sponsors and participants.

Alex has presented to Greater Salem Chamber Economic Development group about commercial development in town (100K sq ft in the pipeline). Will be presenting in town and out of town at other outreach events.

A Mello will be presenting on May 23rd to BOS for ARPA (covid) funds for economic development plan and efiles and document management system.

Motion to adjourn by C Macoul with second by G Garfield. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 8:52am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by K St. Laurent