

## **Economic Development Advisory Committee**

### **3.11.09 Meeting minutes**

#### **Americana Room – Hampshire Hills**

##### **Present:**

Tracy Bardsley, Do-it  
Brad Chappell, Chappell Tractor  
Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co  
Heather Leach, Centrix Bank  
Tim O'Connell, Butternut Farms  
Tom Sapienza, Hampshire Hills Sports Club  
Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc  
George Infanti, Milford Paint  
Janet Langdell, Planning Board representative  
Mike Putnam, Board of Selectmen representative  
Bill Parker, Director Community Development  
Chris Costantino, Conservation Commission  
Rich Ball, Cirtronics Corporation

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T. Sapienza called the meeting to order at 7:35AM. The minutes from the 3.04.09 meeting were read. Janet Langdell made a motion that the minutes be amended in paragraph 4 to read “CNA’s” rather than “CAN’s”. George Infanti seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with that change.

##### **Presentations:**

**Chris Costantino – Conservation Commission** C. Costantino presented a map of the protected lands in Milford. These lands are owned by various entities. This map showed the approximately 12 miles of existing trails that Milford owns and an additional 5-7 miles of trails that are maintained by others/volunteers. Plan is to develop “neighborhoods to wilderness network” for every neighborhood in town to have access to the trail system. The hope is to connect the trails so that people can circumnavigate town on the trails. The Conservation Commission has begun to work more closely with the Planning Board to meet with prospective developers early in the approval process to get useful land (not wet) included as the required open space with a plan. The maps are on the Conservation Commission website (link through town website) and at the Souhegan Valley Land Trust website ([www.svlt.org](http://www.svlt.org)). Many of these trails connect to trails in other towns. T. Bardsley asked if any of the trails were good for biking. C. Costantino informed that some were passable, but all were pretty rough. They are hoping that Comcast through “Comcast Cares” program would be helping to improve the Rail Trail to make it less rough and better for bikes. Also many trails are used by snowmobiles, cross country skiers, horses, and some ATVs as well.

D. White asked about the thought process with the Conservation Commission asking property owners and developers to designate or donate land for trails. He hears of projects being held up in the approval process because of the conservation commission requirements. C. Costantino informed him that new development must have 30% open space per state regulation. They are trying to work with the developers to make it usable space.

D. White then asked why ATVs are not allowed on Mile Slip Road trails. C. Costantino explained that ATVs were allowed to use it for the first year. Because they caused so much damage to the trails and surrounding property, they are now prohibited. The police do not have the capacity to patrol the area. It is possible that the ATV clubs could make arrangements to self police, but that has not come to fruition. M Putnam indicated that many ATV enthusiasts feel that it is too small of trail, but that there is quite a bit of illegal use.

M Putnam asked how much this would impact companies coming in to the Brox property. C. Costantino suggested that the existing trails in Brox be retained and that development could be designed around it.

T. Bardsley mentioned that she would like to see paved or stone dust bike trails. Bike trails that they have biked while on vacation attract a lot of people who stop at businesses along the way. It would be great to have a way to

bike in to the Oval. It is possible now, but part of the path is on a busy road. B. Parker suggested that a Regional plan of biking paths could be developed and that road and sidewalk design be such that a bike lane is created.

G. Infanti suggested that getting the developers and engineers to talk to the Conservation Commission early in the process helps the Town get better open space and helps the developer in getting the project approved.

T. O'Connell asked if there could be any tax incentive in getting a landowner to a tax break on land currently in current use if they allowed a trail easement on the land.

D. White mentioned that he owns a piece of land that the Town would like to have a water easement on. In exchange the Town offered a small piece of land down by the river. After going through the planning process and the voting process, the deal was made null and void because they could not cut a tree down within a certain distance from the river boundary. He found it frustrating that they could have been through the entire planning and voting process only to be held up by regulations regarding tree clearing. This seriously restricts any development in Town along the river. J. Langdell indicated that it is the Shoreline Protection Act that is the source of the restrictions, not the Town. She indicated that this is similar to the issues regarding fire suppression, water and life safety where the regulation comes from the federal or state government, not from the town. T. Sapienza indicated that a bike trail along the river could connect the Oval with trail into several of the other towns.

D. White suggested that part of recommendation to the Town be that the various boards of the town, including the conservation commission, need to work together to make it easier on the developer or business owner. J. Langdell pointed out that there needs to be cooperation from both sides to make this work. H. Leach indicated that it would be helpful to developers and companies, especially those that are less knowledgeable about the approval process, if there were a formal way to connect them to all of the boards, departments and commissions early in the process. J. Langdell suggested that Sarah Marchant in the Town Planning office does this already when they come in to the Town Planning office. B. Parker indicated that this works well for the sophisticated developer, but they may miss some of the less sophisticated customers. He also suggested that the process or checklist be included on the website. M. Ciardelli mentioned also that other times a customer can make it through a large part of the process, only to hit a roadblock with another department. Is there a way to make sure that all aspects are out on the table early? R. Ball suggested that an "ombudsman" that could anticipate various roadblocks could help. M. Ciardelli asked if there was a time frame that the various departments are expected to respond within. B. Parker indicated that his department tries to turn requests around as soon as possible, but that not all departments have this policy.

T. Sapienza asked how we wanted to attack the outlined areas of concern. It was agreed that we will prioritize the items and work through that as a group rather than dividing them into small subcommittees. T. Bardsley suggested that we define measurable and quantifiable goals before we work on the action items. B. Parker suggested that the vision statement that he typed out today might be a place to start. R. Ball cautioned the group about specific goals for two reasons: 1) goals need to have the flexibility to change over time; 2) it is easy to spend too many resources collecting data to see if we have met the goal. D. White suggested that the goal be the vision statement that B. Parker developed. All committee members were asked to e-mail B. Parker with their order of priority for the seven areas by Friday. We will talk about the item given the highest priority next week.

The group discussed the vision statement drafted by B. Parker. D. White made the point that we should only use this statement if we mean it. Support of this statement needs to come from the top strata of the town government. G. Infanti made a motion that we accept the statement as drafted. T. O'Connell mentioned that some of the frustrating issues are state and federal regulations, not from the Town. T. Sapienza noted that the town officials can work in partnership to help local companies to operate within these restraints, not work against them. M. Ciardelli suggested that we put the items in the order of our priority so that it flows better. G. Infanti amended his motion to be that we accept this as a draft of the vision statement. It was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05.