

**Economic Development Advisory Council**

**12.04.13 Meeting minutes**

**Americana Room – Hampshire Hills**

**Present:**

Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co  
Chris Costantino, Conservation Commission  
Mark Fougere, Board of Selectmen  
Tracy Hutchins, DO-IT  
Janet Langdell, Planning Board  
Heather Leach, Centrix Bank  
John McCormack, TIFD  
John Siergiewicz, Hollis Line Machine  
Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc.

**Excused:**

Michael Brisebois, Hitchiner Mfg Co  
Rosie Deloge, Milford School System  
Sean Trombly, Trombly Gardens  
Penny Seaver, Bean Seaver & Smith

Bill Parker, Director Community Development  
Shirley Wilson, Recording secretary

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M. Ciardelli called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

**Minutes:**

D. White suggested a revision to the minutes regarding Wilton needing a secondary water supply and then made a motion to accept the minutes, as amended, from 8/21/13. C. Costantino seconded. M. Fougere, J. Langdell and J. Siergiewicz abstained and all else in favor.

**Follow-up Economic Development Workshop:**

D. White said the Water-Sewer Commission had a meeting with the Selectmen that was cultivated from the joint meeting in July, where it was determined that there is a need to increase or at least keep-up the infrastructure in Milford and that the west 101 corridor be looked at for water expansion in conjunction with the proposed State improvements. It is my personal opinion that we look at putting water to the town line and we met with the Selectmen to discuss that need. The Water-Sewer Commission does not expand the water service; the income from the users is to maintain the system. There needs to be a vehicle in place to be able to expand or distribute the burden between the citizens of Milford, the water users and the land owners. It was a good meeting. The Commission itself is very protective of the users; really it's a non-profit business although we put money into the capital fund. There was a favorable response from the Selectmen if we were to come up with a plan and put it as a warrant article. There was also a very favorable response from the potential customers; Dunkin Donuts, Irving, and Penguin/Extra Mart. With that said, the Commission agreed to put out an RFP for engineering plans to design a system from Jones Crossing to the Wilton line. We will also need to upgrade the 8" section to a 12" line, not for the customers but to extend the municipal connection to Wilton. The bids have been opened but not awarded yet. TF Moran was the low bidder. The cost of income received will not cover the costs associated with the expansion, but it would be a win-win situation as it will benefit the exiting customers in that area, there will be value to the tax revenue for the Town, and beneficial as an option for future development. The potential of an inter-municipal water connection with Wilton could augment our water needs and be price-effective if we could work out a deal. It would not replace Pennechuck Water, but give us more options. Also, Wilton does not have a backup source of water. They did expand their 12" line almost to the bridge by the Pine Valley Mill so we are real close; however the real costs will come in when we have to cross the river and we would like to see Wilton participate in expanding this line now. Discussion pertaining to the Wilton Water Commission followed. D. White said at our next meeting we will award the contract and send it out to bid so we can get some real costs in order to present to the Board of Selectmen for a warrant article. Also, the dialog has been started but there needs to be further discussion with the owners and with town staff regarding some type of contribution.

J. Langdell inquired if any cursory research has been done for alternate funding sources. D. White said there is no funding in Concord right now for infrastructure expansion. B. Parker added that there has been initial discussion about creating a Betterment district or TIF District expansion. M. Fougere brought up the possibility of CDBG grant money but said that would require some type of job creation. J. Langdell referenced a creative CDBG project in Claremont or Laconia. D. White noted that the owner of the lot next door to the Irving Station would

be willing to participate in some fashion because Irving's well is on that vacant lot which has good build-out potential. J. Langdell asked if there would be any conflict of interest with the owner of that lot also being the owner of one of the engineering firms that submitted a bid for the RFP. M. Fougere said it would be to our advantage to have a local firm. D. White stated that it was an open bid and didn't feel there would be any conflict. M. Fougere said that the Selectmen concurred with the Water-Sewer Commissioners that we needed a fully designed plan in order to get the real cost of the project. D. White said the engineering will be around \$40,000 and the total estimate will be around \$500,000 to get water to the town line. The other piece is that the State will be doing road improvements in 2015-2016 so now is the time. B. Parker said it came up at that meeting, as well as the public meeting with the State a few months ago. M. Fougere said one of the property owners came up to him after the meeting offering to contribute an extra amount per year to make this happen. D. White added that another owner offered a substantial dollar amount and that shows how important this is to those businesses. M. Ciardelli reiterated that infrastructure was determined as one of the top priorities at the joint meeting. D. White said the Commission needs the support of the EDAC because expansion is usually born by the developer. When you look at the cost and you look at the use and revenue over the next ten years; it's just not good business sense, so how do you fund this from a user standpoint?

J. Langdell brought up the property across from the Pine Valley Mill. D. White said Wilton has the water rights for that side of the bridge, set up back in the late 1800's; however, the Milford Selectmen can null and void that law and take that back, but is it smart to do that? H. Leach noted that section of town was a concern back when the subcommittee was looking at the land uses and that was part of the reason for the overlay district for that area. In the big picture, it's a gateway into town, it's underutilized, and we won't get a high end user there without water. J. Langdell said water expansion will serve the immediate businesses but it really is to enhance the long term viability of that section of town. D. White said it's an investment and while it will be a capital expense, it will also be an asset.

M. Fougere ended discussion regarding the warrant article process by saying it may be too late for this year because the voters will need to be educated if we're asking them to fund 90% and we will need to flush out the betterment process first. He also clarified that the Water-Sewer Commission will pay for the engineering costs to design the project, then it will go out to bid and the actual project cost will have to go to warrant. J. McCormack said the Town will take on the role of the developer and have to justify the investment. We also need to put an economic value on this to get Wilton to participate and show them the benefit. D. White said everyone needs to be onboard and referenced the sidewalk project on Nashua when DPW and Planning weren't on the same team and it fell flat.

T. Hutchins brought up comments regarding economic development from the Wilton Selectmen. J. Langdell clarified that their comments pertained more towards housing development and putting more land into conservation. As a taxpayer in the Town of Wilton, it would be good for them to move forward with economic development. B. Parker said he will look into some of the funding mechanisms. J. Langdell said going onto the 2015 town warrant will give us a full year to plan, promote and get the word out so that it will be on the public's consciousness and wrong information is dispelled. M. Ciardelli asked for consensus and all agreed to support this project. J. Langdell added through taxes and betterment, because we're all going to benefit and that's what we need to show. There should also be a designated champion to take this on and keep it moving forward.

M. Ciardelli said that will be a good topic for the upcoming joint meeting. J. Langdell inquired if the Selectmen had any topics they want to bring forward. M. Fougere said it will be on the agenda Monday but one of the things we've been talking about that came out of discussion at the original meeting was infrastructure. There is a need to take a harder look at infrastructure and be more proactive. We will take a look at bridges, the Oval and sidewalks and address maintenance. B. Parker said the West Elm St water project is a good priority but this group could continue to push the whole infrastructure idea and how important that is, including the sidewalks on Nashua St along with road and sidewalk improvements.

J. Langdell inquired about the status of the grants. B. Parker responded that are two grant applications and we haven't heard anything yet.

D. White noted that the DPW budget is greatly increased this year and said it is one thing to increase it, but another to get it done. There are things that can be done as part of the normal daily, weekly or monthly budget

and he will bring that up at the joint meeting, simple things like aesthetics that just need to be kept up. Within one week of the last joint meeting, the weeds were taken off the Oval sidewalks. Why wasn't that done three months before? The weeds at the ball field in Shepard Park can be taken care of in one day by three or four employees. That shows that the town cares and economically brings people into town. Those are things that cost nothing because they're already in the budget. J. Langdell said that sounds like a management plan. J. Siergiewicz said that would be a management issue and how to keep your crew busy. J. Langdell said the recreation commission is requiring some in-kind work to be done when people want to use the ball fields and maybe those kinds of things can be programmed into the volunteer piece as well. There are many groups that use those fields that could pull volunteers in. D. White reiterated that our departments should be able to do the maintenance in our parks. M. Fougere agreed that prioritization is important. DPW had two positions that were frozen since 2008 because of the economy and they are now able to hire. It is also important that the department is focused on the things we feel are significant versus what they think important. D. White said it is one thing to pave roads but we need to keep up with the maintenance such as reclaiming ditches which hasn't been done in years. J. Langdell said we also need to look at the small things like scout projects. They look great in the first year, but there needs to be a maintenance plan in place for even things like the flower beds and the pergola at Keyes Field.

### **Status and Results: Economic Development Community Input Survey – Discussion on Next Steps**

H. Leach said we wrapped up the survey with 170 responses. The gist of the responses is that people are open to economic development as long as it's not big. They don't want big buildings, big manufacturing or big housing. They want it to be kept at a scale that keeps with the character of the town. It was very apparent that economic development meant different things to different people, but there was no specific anti-anything other than big. People were also supportive of putting money away into capital reserve funds. T. Hutchins added that there was a clear attitude that people were ok with making an investment in the future. M. Ciardelli said those responses were from people who invested time to take the survey. J. Langdell noted that the RSA's allow for a \$1-\$5 tax surcharge on top of vehicle registrations that creates a reserve fund for local transportation system improvements. T. Hutchins said transportation was another clear theme; limited transportation options in town for access to public and regional transportation.

J. McCormack commented that Milford already has a number of big employers in town. H. Leach said people understand that while we may be able to support what we have, they also think that if you bring another Hitchiner in, you bring housing, workforce, road and school issues in. J. McCormack said we're already looking at school enrollment going down over the next ten years, so you better think about those kinds of things. H. Leach said its trained employees and some of those businesses are bringing people in from Lowell every day. J. Langdell said those are low level employees. J. Siergiewicz said that is what those companies need. J. McCormack said it would be good to get the information out about some of the things that are happening and maybe profile some of the great viable companies we have to show support for the existing businesses. J. Langdell said that was an excellent point but the survey showed that people wanted small, more niche type businesses but they also want more jobs and better paying jobs. J. Siergiewicz said the only way to sustain economic development is to make or grow things. It's not about a big box store that buys things from all over and pays people \$9/hour to stock the shelves. The town built a technology center at the high school; that's a wonderful thing. If people don't want anything new or big, then we will rot on the vine. D. White said there is an uptick of manufacturing coming back to New Hampshire. J. Langdell said she would like to revisit the survey relative to big manufacturing and a lengthy discussion on manufacturing ensued.

T. Hutchins said that the survey was to take the temperature of the community before we researched and prepared an economic development policy to recommend to the Board of Selectmen.

### **Proposed Commercial Rezoning (South Street/Hammond Road/Ponemah Hill Road)**

B. Parker gave an overview of the proposed rezoning for the properties between South St, Ponemah Hill Rd, Powers St and NH Rte 101 bypass and distributed a copy of the plan and staff report dated 11/21/13. It's a great opportunity and a good location from staff's perspective. J. Langdell said the Planning Board has had a number of discussions about this and we brought it to a really good point at last night's meeting. We looked at this from the perspective of what is good for Milford and what is in the best interests of the Town for the long term. The Hammond Rd area is already zoned commercial as is South St and we saw a lot of benefit to this property relative to its location adjacent to the bypass for prime commercial type development rather than housing. The Board was also very sensitive to the fact that there is significant residential development on Webster St and Prospect St with

the potential for additional residential development on Prospect St Ext as well as along Ponemah Hill Rd. We felt that a portion of the intended Commercial area be changed to Limited Commercial-Business (LCB) for a better fit as it still allows housing, offices and some level of commercial development. The majority of the main tract of land, could all be changed to ICI for the flexibility of that district. With the visibility and access from 101, it would be better primed as commercial land than residential. We would then create a buffer adjacent to the Ponemah Hill Rd residences as LCB. We are trying to maintain the land owner's rights as well as the long term needs of the Town while looking at the fostering document of this council for future economic growth and potential. This new configuration presents a good balance between the needs of the Town, the needs of the current businesses, our future needs and those of the developer. Multi-family is allowed in the district; however, it's not just apartment buildings, it also means condominiums and you can do higher density development in the Commercial, Residence B and LCB districts. This plan is also includes one or two new office buildings. There is potential here to contain existing businesses as well as attract new businesses. We are planning to take this to Town warrant for 2014. D. White said this is the last big visible piece of land in Milford and that is a benefit.

B. Parker said the long term goal is to provide more road connections between South St and Ponemah Hill Rd as well as potential utilities. D. White said a loop water system would be very advantageous to the Town and the possible relocation of the water tank on Prospect Hill, that is in dire need of upgrading, would be beneficial for water suppression and supply. J. Langdell said those two potential positives should be made known and EDAC will be kept in the loop. The owner has been included in much of this discussion and we could also bring it forward at the joint meeting.

### **Other Reports**

- Pine Valley Mill is proceeding and site improvements are currently underway.
- St. Joseph's/Milford Medical Center is moving through the Planning Board in a positive direction.
- Great Bridge Properties is still working on multi-family off Capron Rd and are looking at traffic issues and the sidewalk.
- Possible free-range poultry processing facility on the last lot on Hollow Oak Dr.
- Mike Monks has a client who is looking at one of the buildings on Meadowbrook Dr.
- We are moving forward with the old police station and determining a course of action with DES and the EPA.
- Dunkin Donuts, which we've already talked about, is expanding.
- McDonalds is underway with their site improvements.
- CVS is still exploring sites near the Oval.
- A realtor with the Norwood Group is looking to market the Gauthier Brothers site at Savage Rd and Scarborough Ln. We also discussed the need for a hotel.
- Cumberland Farms is looking at the former 99 Restaurant Site and going before the Planning Board for discussion.
- The South St and Oval Area Improvements are still moving forward, but it has been difficult working with PSNH and we are still waiting for final easements. PSNH and the State DOT have been the main staling points. The majority of the improvements are on the bank's property and the Bradler property. The bank has been very cooperative, but not the Bradlers. J. Langdell said that we need to let people know about the delays. B. Parker said we try to do that at every opportunity. Also, now there is new emphasis based on other traffic issues and that committee will need to look at the prioritization of improvements. It will be a priority for 2014.
- The CMAQ intersection improvements at Emerson and Armory Rd are still scheduled for spring/summer 2014.
- We are trying to get the word out through our newsletters, and distributed copies of Milford Forward.

Dale, Matt and Bill will get together next week to work on the agenda for the joint meeting on 12/16/13.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10AM

Minutes of the December 4, 2013 meeting were approved on January 29, 2014.