

## **Economic Development Advisory Council**

### **11.03.10 Meeting minutes**

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

##### **Present:**

Tracy Bardsley, Do-it  
George Infanti, Milford Paint  
Heather Leach, Centrix Bank  
John McCormack, TIFD  
Tom Sapienza, Hampshire Hills Sports Club  
Penny Seaver, Smith, Seaver & Bean  
Sean Trombly, Trombly Farms  
Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc

##### **Excused:**

Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co  
Michelle Sampson, Library

Chris Costantino, Conservation Commission  
Rosie Deloge, Milford School District  
Bill Parker, Director Community Development  
Janet Langdell, Planning Board representative

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T. Sapienza called the meeting to order at 7:30AM and welcomed John Siergiewicz. The members introduced themselves and gave a brief summary of their involvement with this council.

#### **Discussion with potential members – current issues they are facing, ideas, role of EDAC**

T. Sapienza gave a brief history of the council and said that this group has a free exchange of ideas with a good cross flow and a variety of skill set and backgrounds. J. Siergiewicz gave a brief history of Hollis Line Machine and said a lot of his products are for the energy market. He's a machinist now running a million dollar company and he's learned to be flexible. We're trying to hire new people and there's a lot of talent out there that has been abandoned that we've been able to pick up. The average age in the company is now on the top side of fifty. He has been working with the machine shop program at the Milford School system for twenty years and has had some success, but working with eighteen year olds has its challenges. We expanded the business to Milford three years ago and have put in some improvements to the building and have about twelve people from Milford working there. It's a nice town for industry. J. Langdell said that John is a very proactive businessman and explained the proposal that was brought to the Planning Board a while ago, for future improvements. The Board was impressed with the design, the forethought to draw new business into that corner, the scale of the project and the sensitivity to the environment; it was a great package.

J. Siergiewicz said he helped start the NH Machining Association which was based on committees from local schools and the Milford school system is definitely an asset with the right equipment and good teachers in place that have come out of the industries. What is needed now is a transition to work program and discussion followed. T. Sapienza added that the school is working on programs such as job shadowing opportunities and internships. J. McCormack said he was impressed with John's statement during the introductions about rediscovering the talent that is out there. J. Siergiewicz said they deal in technology and we're fortunate in New England to have the MIT's, the Harvard's and the other 300 plus colleges that have been training people for 250 years. People brought up in New England have a certain discipline due to the climate, the geography and the seasons, but with all the modern conveniences we've become lazy. However, we still have to work and we still have a responsibility to society.

J. Siergiewicz said he's been in the area his whole life and watched 101 develop. Because we move materials and people around, transportation is a concern. He is a proponent of roundabouts, as traffic can continue to move and not stack up. He also brought up the new curbing at Old Wilton Rd and Rte 101, questioning the need with the tractor trailer trucks tires that consistently going over them when making that right turn. G. Infanti wondered why the State didn't add a right turn lane there when the construction was taking place. T. Sapienza said this group has talked a lot about getting government departments to operate more efficiently and have better customer service. J. Langdell added that the Planning Board is working on the traffic and transportation chapter of the Master Plan. J. Siergiewicz said there needs to be an east west highway across southern New Hampshire and then inquired about the process of moving ideas from this group. T. Sapienza said our main charter is to work from the

recommendations, but we can act on others such as the hotel idea that just popped up at a meeting. We are looking at pulling in several individuals that are not on this committee to work with a small group. J. Langdell said that the hotel idea has been tossed around for many years and although we've made some attempts, this new informal group will start to move forward as an addendum to the big plan. So traffic and transportation and an east west highway is something the Community Development Department and the NRPC have led the leaders in the area to take forward to the State ten year plan. Bill is on the TTAC (Transportation Technical Advisory Committee) that oversees quite a bit of our region's ten year plan and coordinates with the State. That kind of reinforcement, paper documents from the BOS and EDAC supporting an east west highway or other project is very beneficial. P. Seaver mentioned the website sub-committee who took the idea to the town and the community; now it is rocking and rolling and being incorporated with a marketing brand. The land use sub-committee is deciding on how to beautify the town and work on the zoning issues. They have picked a corridor to come up with a plan to move that forward. The details are taking place. J. Siergiewicz said we may need a ten, twenty-five or hundred year plan and is there enough teeth to work the project or plan through. He referenced the parkway plans in Nashua that have been around for forty plus years. D. White said he agreed with the growth of an east west corridor. G. Infanti explained that this group concentrates more on Milford and added that all three sub-committees have had an impact. The policies and procedures sub-committee met with various departments to discuss was wasn't working and provided ideas of how to get from point A to point D without B and C getting in the way. The land use sub-committee came up with a plan last year and found that when we went in front of the Planning Board we were kind of snowballed from left field by one single group, so we backed off a bit a found a different area to focus on that makes more sense right now; Elm St. We all have the same thing in mind and it may take baby steps, but the reality is, six months later those baby steps have changed some policies and the website is being redesigned. Over time, this committee has made a huge difference and those baby steps have turned into big strides and that just pumps us up for what is next. Although change is hard to accept and a few feathers may get ruffled along the way, this committee is about making things better and the end result will be a huge difference for the Town of Milford. T. Sapienza said it is a balancing act and we are very cognizant of jumping into just one thing. B. Parker said this group has been very good about going to the Selectmen and the Planning Board with their ideas and getting the buy-in to let this group move forward and accomplish things. Those boards for whatever reasons are letting this group pick the actions. D. White added that Guy Scaife's support has been very advantageous. He has helped move the website changes forward and has been accommodating for our meetings with the town departments. Also the department heads and Guy read these minutes, so people are paying attention and attitudes are changing.

J. Siergiewicz said he was impressed with the amount of participation of individuals for the Souhegan Valley Boys and Girls Club; it makes for a better society.

H. Leach made a motion to recommend John Siergiewicz as a full member of the Economic Development Council. G. Infanti seconded and all in favor.

**Minutes:**

No actions were taken for the 9/15/10 minutes.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

**Land Use**

H. Leach said the subcommittee has two distinct projects going on.

1. We are working with the NRPC to put together some guidelines for Elm St, running from Granite Town Plaza to the Wilton town line. We are looking at an overlay for entry ways, lighting, etc to encourage economic development of that corridor and there are many issues to consider.
  - a. What can we do to make the vacant properties more attractive?
  - b. That area is the gateway to the Brox property.
  - c. There are superfund sites in the area.
  - d. How do we address the heavily trafficked stretch from Market Basket to Wilton from both a safety standpoint and the esthetic aspect.

When the economy comes back, that stretch will be developed and we want to be able to tell developers ahead of time what our expectations are, not after they come to the Planning Board. We are going to have a public forum in a couple of weeks, inviting all the land owners in and around that corridor. NRPC is helping us put together a visual survey of what could be done. As an example, Heather said she tried to take some pictures of buildings in that area, and had a tough time because there were so many power lines. B. Parker said the date for the West End breakfast meeting will be December 3<sup>rd</sup> and it will be a quick event from 7:30 to 8:45.

2. We're looking at the overall zoning grid for the town and have broken that down into short term fixes that can go onto the March ballot, such as basic administrative clean up making the zoning ordinance more understandable and longer term projects such as whether our zones are correct and if the zoning district uses are appropriate for current economic times. J. Langdell said we looked at the geography of Milford, not just the zones, which go hand in hand with traffic and transportation, highways, development and land use. H. Leach brought up the zoning chart they are working from and offered copies to the group. The philosophy of the sub-committee has been "why not rather than why". If there is not a reason why something shouldn't go in a district, then the economic factor should make that determination.

J. Siergiewicz said if we look at New Hampshire's economic history, he doesn't feel that the state has an industrial plan. The economy is not going to come back until we get the three legged stool of manufacturing, mining and farming back in place. J. Langdell said the land use sub-committee has been looking at how to make it less cumbersome for small businesses to come in while balancing the needs of the community and business. T. Sapienza said there is no question that small businesses drive the country

### **Policies and Procedures**

J. McCormack said Bill Parker has started the process of scheduling meetings with the four main departments; Community Development, Water/Sewer, Fire and DPW. I've also asked Bill to get any additional guidelines for objectives from Guy and the Selectmen. The ideas from the original meetings have started to sink in and this time around we will begin to focus on objectives which should be more specific and time focused. He referenced several examples from the town report that speak to the point of improving communication that were around before this committee came along, but the focus and awareness is starting to become much more in the front of everyone's minds. Finally it's always a goal of this and other boards to continue to strive for better communication not only within the Town Hall but also between the Town Hall and Milford citizen. We've got good support on the general goals from the Selectmen and from Guy. D. White added that the sub-committee should go in with an agenda so that the departments will be more prepared. J. McCormack said we are not trying to set the departments' objectives, that is between Guy and the department heads, but will be looking for examples to bring forward to help this process along.

### **Website Development/Branding**

Website:

T. Bardsley said that the website is coming along very well; Mike McNerny is working diligently with the website developer, fine tuning all the minor details and should be ready for a soft launch soon. The new site is vastly improved and there will be opportunity for town department heads and this group to give input.

Branding:

T. Bardsley said that we will be holding our second focus group today with the Rotary Club. As a committee we're quite excited about this and will again gather perceptions and ideas. We continue to move along. J. McCormack said he would also like to ask the department heads in the upcoming meetings to check their awareness of the website and how they will use the website as a communication tool to streamline policies and procedures. It is potentially a very valuable tool. J. Langdell asked if the soft launch was anticipated before the end of the year. T. Bardsley said she anticipates so; Mike is still adding content and working out a few glitches. J. Langdell inquired about the functionality and asked if there would be a community resources link on the new

website. B. Parker answered yes; the intent is to have a lot of linkage. T. Bardsley said there has been a lot of thought given to promoting business and making it easier to navigate for both residents and businesses. J. Langdell said she is looking forward to the end product. T. Sapienza reiterated that this group should have access and comment before the website goes live. R. Deloge added that there is a Granite Town Media Advisory Committee meeting tomorrow night at which Mike will give a report to the committee.

**Recruitment of hotel/lodging development:**

T. Sapienza said that a hotel in town would have a huge impact for a lot of businesses and that may become an unofficial subcommittee. B. Parker said our first meeting will be scheduled soon; we just have to get together to figure out the attack plan.

**Review of recent community wide events:**

**Pumpkin festival:**

T. Bardsley said this was our best festival ever with 30,000 to 35,000 people. The festival alone generated 20.5 tons of trash. The weather cooperated and we had great attendance in everything. The conservative estimate for the economic impact to the town is \$2.6M in revenue. We had over thirty non-profit groups participate and raised a combined \$50,000 to be reinvested. We had more vendors than ever and if you include the crafters, there were just about one hundred. T. Sapienza said there was a lot of good publicity and it put Milford on the map. T. Bardsley said the cannon contributed to that; however, they actually lost money because of the cannon by over planning. We were well represented in the Boston and northern Massachusetts markets as well as New Hampshire with newspaper, magazine and TV ads. J. Langdell asked if the multiplier used for the festival stats was for day trips. T. Bardsley said it is based on per person spending in the Monadnock region which for a spring event is about \$86.00 per person. Fall events tend to be a little bit higher, but this is an estimate. A brief discussion on the pros and cons of the event followed.

**Souhegan Valley Expo:**

T. Sapienza said there were 175 booths, counting non-profits and this year was significantly greater than last year. It has grown every year from the original two tennis courts. This year Guy did a good job organizing the parking. All the vendors were parked down at the Chappell fields and the dome and back lots were full all day. All the vendors were very pleased with the turnout. We also had a lot of good publicity and the event brought people into the community with ancillary spending. H. Leach said there was a joint trade show at the Pease Trade Port with multiple cities and six Chambers held the same day and a lot of our bank people were jumping between the shows in Milford and Portsmouth and their comments were that we had twice as many vendors and it was a more vibrant show. G. Infanti said there was a lot of positive feedback and the only negative comments were that some of booths started breaking down early at 6:30 and the Chamber needs to enforce that. R. Deloge mentioned that the governor was even directing traffic for a minor fender bender when he returned to the expo for his second visit of the day.

**Ghost train Rail Trail run:**

B. Parker said C. Costantino organized a small run on the rail trail from Public Works down to Brookline and we put together some low key goodie bags with coupons, flyers and menus from downtown merchants. We put a little map on the back of the brown bag and said to visit the oval after the run. There were 67 people; 12 Milford residents, 52 from NH outside of Milford and 9 runners were from out of state. C. Costantino said the race tripled in size from the 26 runners last year. B. Parker said that even with small events, we are trying to promote Milford and get this into our consciousness.

**Update on new and pending development:**

B. Parker said there is a lot happening quietly.

- The groundbreaking ceremony for Hitchiner's 46,000 SF expansion was last week. J. McCormack said that growth is encouraging especially with 160 new hires since the beginning of the year.
- Between Hitchiner, Hollis Line Machine and Alene Candles, business is doing well. JP Chemical is looking for additional space.
- This afternoon we will be talking with a perspective buyer for Permatlach, although we're not sure what the plans are yet.

- Elishas is being renovated for a new Chinese restaurant.
- Chapangas Griddle and Grill is now open.
- The Zoning Board approved a variance for a ten unit affordable housing development across from the Pine Valley Mill.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

J. Langdell brought up the new Souhegan Valley coupon books “Coudough” that will benefit Share and any other local non-profit that sells them. The website is [www.coudoughs.com](http://www.coudoughs.com) for additional information. It’s a great idea and the philosophy is to keep the money locally and support our local businesses. The book costs \$20.00 but there are over \$500.00 worth of coupons that you can really use.

H. Leach inquired when we should go back to the Selectmen. After a brief discussion, it was decided that after the deliberative session would be best.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be scheduled for January 19, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08AM.

The minutes of the November 03, 2010 meeting were approved on January 26, 2011