

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 12, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Sayre, Chair; G. Jeffrey Keith, Barry Cyr, Sean Lindsay, Margaret Jacobson, Thomas Deffenbaugh, Joy Dorin, Sue O'Connor

ALSO PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Mark Pellegrini, Director of Neighborhood Services
and Economic Development

Adoption of Minutes of January 8, 2009

Mr. Lindsay moved to adopt the minutes as drafted, Mr. Keith seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Election of Officers

Mr. Lindsey moved to reelect the incumbent slate of Jack Sayre as Chairman and Jeffrey Keith as Vice-Chairman. Ms. Dorin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Report of the Planning Director

The Planning Director reported on the following items:

■ Multi-Family Housing Moratorium

Mr. Pellegrini said the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) adopted a six-month moratorium on applications for multi-family housing projects; one is currently researching information on Manchester's housing stock and the zoning regulations as they regulate multi-family housing. The moratorium is set to expire mid-June 2009, at which time the PZC will decide whether to amend the zoning regulations as they relate to multi-family housing. Mr. Pellegrini said the planning department had compiled information on housing conditions in Manchester and offered to present that to the EDC at their next meeting. The members present were receptive and that item will be on the next EDC agenda.

■ Redevelopment Agency

Mr. Pellegrini said the Redevelopment Agency is working on the downtown parking lot development proposal and a redevelopment plan for the Broad Street commercial district. He said the Agency has determined that developing the parking lot on Main and Forest Streets, in conjunction with the abutting property owner if possible, is their priority at this time. They have reviewed both the development concept plan presented to the Board of Directors that was prepared in 2008, and a proposal submitted by one of the Agency members. The Agency has requested funds for appraisals and for market studies for the downtown parking lot as well as some properties in the Broad Street study area.

Mr. Pellegrini said the Agency will conduct planning charrettes to identify preferred land uses and architectural and urban design concepts to be included in the Broad Street plan. He said the charrette would be managed so that those who are not actively participating at the charrette worktables will be able to make comments as they observe the process of the two charrette teams.

- Economic Development Strategy Follow-up

Mr. Pellegrini said a few people volunteered for the working groups to follow up on recommendations from the December 2008 economic strategy session held at the Manchester Country Club. He said there was not a very strong response considering how many people attended the December session. Mr. Keith observed the invitation to participate seemed like a lot of work for volunteers to complete. Ms. Parseliti said sending out an invitation again may get additional volunteers, because early January is often a busy time of the year. It was agreed that Mr. Pellegrini would send out another invitation to the participants.

- Aquifer Protection Regulations

Mr. Pellegrini said the Planning Department is developing the aquifer protection regulations that must be adopted in accordance with State Statutes. He said the department would be holding a workshop in late March or early April on the regulations for the Planning and Zoning Commission, and he would invite the EDC to attend if they were interested.

Report of the Special Services District

Ms. Parseliti reported on the following:

- 822 Main Street is under construction; the new property owner is renovating the façade and is proposing commercial uses on the ground floor and apartments on the second floor. She noted the upper floors of the former Marlow's building are also being converted to apartments. She said both projects provide new, modern apartments to the downtown residential stock. She was meeting with Manchester Community College officials to encourage them to market these units to MCC students.
- The New Seasons' offices have been occupied for some time, and their clients will be coming in beginning March 23.
- Ms. Parseliti also said the SSD reviewed the Main/Forest Street parking lot development concept proposal by Mr. Thomas Tomko of the Redevelopment Agency. She said the SSD liked the ideas in the concept with some reservations or suggestions.

Report of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

- Ms. O'Connor said the Chamber had 12 new members sign up recently. She also said the Chamber had a successful network and marketing session which was well received by the participants, and will probably be held again on a regular basis.

- Ms. O'Connor noted that sponsorships are down for Chamber events, reflecting the current economic conditions and she noted that the Chamber's annual meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2009 at the Villa Louisa.

Other Business

Mr. Pellegrini said the Downtown Development Incentive Program is set to expire at the end of April 2009. The incentive program was intended to package personal property and real estate tax agreement incentives available to downtown property owners. There was a brief review of the nature of the program as well as its utilization. It was the consensus of the members that even though the program had not been widely subscribed to, it would be better to leave the program in place in the event there is interest going forward as economic and real estate market conditions change in the future. The sense was that it did no harm to leave the program on the books and up to now did not seem to create any financial burden on the Town.