

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Sayre, Chair; Bernard Apter, Joy Dorin, G. Jeffrey Keith, Thomas Deffenbaugh

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

Discussion of 2010 Work Program

Commission members discussed the upcoming workload and projects on the near horizon for the Town which may involve or relate to the Commission's work. Mr. Pellegrini reviewed the list of projects he was familiar with as follows:

▪ Broad Street Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Agency is moving on to the implementation stage of the Redevelopment Plan since that plan has been adopted and the voters had approved the \$8 million bond referendum for the Phase I priority area. These activities will include continuing discussions with property owners, prospective developers, and beginning the consultant review and selection process for adopting new zoning regulations. Various due diligence activities around selected key properties will also be occurring in 2010.

▪ Town Plan of Conservation and Development

The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development needs to be updated by 2011, to conform with State statutory requirements. Mr. Pellegrini said the department will be looking at ways to structure the planning process to address the traditional planning elements required in the state statutes and incorporate the smart growth principles which were recently incorporated into the statutes. The EDC will be involved in this planning process.

▪ Downtown Parking Lot Study

The Town and the SSD will jointly apply for a grant to study the downtown parking situation. Ms. Parseliti explained that with the increasing conversion of spaces to office use resulting in increased employee parking, and an emerging trend to convert upper floors to residential use the Downtown commissioners are concerned both with the amount of parking that may be required and the location of that parking. She said there had been some suggestions that the Town acquire additional property in the vicinity, but a study would be important to determine how much parking should be added and where that parking should be located to preserve the historic qualities of the district and the neighborhood.

- Mary Cheney Library Study

The Town has commissioned a site analysis and concept development process to examine how the Mary Cheney Library could be expanded at its present location, and how that expansion could enhance both the library and Center Park. This exercise is intended to focus on developing the best possible solution at the current location.

- Golf Course RFP for Management

The Town will be engaged in a public process to gather opinions and suggestions on the role of a golf course in Manchester, and the objectives for what a successful golf course would provide to the Town. The EDC may be asked to provide representation on a steering committee to work on the development of that RFP.

- Economic Development Strategic Planning

The Workforce Development Committee is pursuing its project to develop a jobs network website. The Branding and Marketing Committee is developing a draft proposal for professional services to develop a long-term branding strategy and marketing campaign for the Town. The Small Business Assistance Committee is pursuing the creation of a virtual town office website that will help people navigate the Town's local permit system. All of these projects will be ongoing through at least the first part of 2010.

After discussing this list of projects, the Commissioners discussed other ideas. One of the major initiatives Commission members wanted to undertake in 2010 is to re-institute the business visitation program. The staff will be asked to identify local businesses in various sectors and develop a list of questions, and EDC members will be asked to visit these individual companies. Mr. Cyr said in the past this has been valuable to show the Town's interest in local businesses, and as a way for the EDC to learn the current issues or opportunities facing local businesses and help identify and resolve concerns that may be addressed by the Town.

Commission members also said they would like to assist with the Special Services District's strategic planning work, and look for opportunities to be a partner and to assist the SSD in their ventures. They also suggested periodic briefings with the Manchester Redevelopment Agency, to look for opportunities to assist the Agency with the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan. Another idea was to offer to the administration and Board of Directors that the EDC helped to coordinate the Economic Development Strategic Planning task forces and work groups and to act as a sounding board for their proposals.

Reports

Commission members agreed that given the discussion of the work program, it was not necessary to have reports from the planning director or the downtown manager at this time.

Other Business

Commission members discussed the need to fill vacancies, including the vacancy of Mr. Hamilton. Commission members also asked for the list of the current members and their terms.