Draft Minutes

TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NH
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
January 23, 2014
7:00 PM Town Council Chamber

Members Present: Gary Levy, Chair (Town Council Rep), Bill Arcieri (Member at Large), Rod Bowles (Business Association), Jay Dugal (NCDC Rep), Leo Filion (NCDC Rep), Philip Nazzaro (Town Council Rep), , Valerie Shelton (Planning Board Rep), Amy Thompson (Member at Large), and Steve Fournier

Member Absent*:* Gerry O’Connell (Member at Large) and Michael Provost (Business Association),

Call To Order*:* 7:05PM

Agenda:

Mr. Peter Kwass, Principal of Peter Kwass Consulting, Somerville, MA, was introduced by the Chair to make another power point presentation of his findings for discussion with the EDC and follow this with questions/concerns/discussion. The EDC has seen most of this presentation previously. Mr. Kwass asked that public comments be held to the end of the presentation, if possible, but he will pause between sections for brief clarification questions. The entire document may be found at: <http://www.newmarketnh.gov/sites/newmarketnh/files/file/file/economic_development_findings_and_recommendations_presenation.pdf>

His presentation this evening included a review for the EDC and the public:

Economic Development Goals
*Economic Overview* (pp 4-22)
*A Tour of the Town’s Business and Mixed Use Zoning Districts – Development Opportunities* (pp 24-32)
*A tour of the Town’s Business and Mixed Use Zoning Districts* – Districts with Significant *Barriers to Development* (pp 34-42)
*A Tour of the Town’s Business and Mixed Use Zoning Districts – Districts with No Additional Development Potential* (pp 40-43)
Key Conclusions:

* Newmarket has important assets that create economic development opportunities yet also has some liabilities that need to be addressed/taken into account
* There are a number of potential business targets consistent with local and regional economic trends and community preferences
* Development is likely to be incremental
* High commercial occupancy rate makes additional commercial property development a precondition for business growth

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* Achieving goal of measurably reducing property tax rate would require a very aggressive commercial development effort (To reduce the tax rate by $1.00 would require an increase in valuation of commercial properties by $46.3 million, from $125.7 million in 2011 to $172.0 million, or 37 percent.)
* Downtown offers most favorable economic development opportunities
* Residential provisions of M-2 and M-2A zones are likely to hinder the objective of mixed-use
* B2 and B3 zones offer more limited opportunities

Public Comment: Burt Allen, Moody Point, asked Mr. Kwass if he had looked at the local geology of the lands in Newmarket for hydraulic fracturing possibilities, or “fracking”. This is the process of drilling and injecting fluid into the ground at a high pressure in order to fracture shale rocks to release natural gas inside.

Outline of Recommendations:

General Principles (pp 56-57)
Commercial Development (pp 58-60)
Business Development (pp 61-62)
Visitor Attraction (pp 63-64)
Downtown Revitalization (pp 65-66)

Repurposing of Zones (i.e., B-2 and B-3) Originally Targeted Primarily for Industrial Uses:

* Initially-anticipated industrial uses are poorly aligned with trends in the regional economy and the town’s competitive position
* Consider low-intensity uses more attuned to site limitations and character of surrounding area, for example….
1. Continuing Care Retirement Community:

Developed and managed by experienced operators
Limited demand on town services

1. Town offers many attractive features:

 Outdoor recreation
Access to regional historical, recreational, and cultural venues
Proximity to UNH – enrichment opportunities
Interesting, walkable downtown
Proximity to regional hospital

3. Low density residential

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Public Comments:
Dan Wright (Town Council- Rep to the Planning Board) believes the M-2A zone is the most valuable asset that we may have and we should focus our efforts there now. Dale Pike (Town Council) believes that we are going in the right direction with this plan and thanked the committee and consultant for their hard work. He is concerned about the density of residency and how this is affecting our tax situation. Although having single and multi-family housing gives the town a nice character, it may be increasing our service demand and hurting our tax rate. He would also like to see a dock downtown and a restaurant too. Burt Allen is concerned that we do not have enough parking in the downtown area.

Goals for the Next Meeting:
The EDC would like to see the major points/suggestions outlined in a brief report – a page or two at the most. This would enable the members to have time to review the report from this evening, determine what has been learned, what are the actions we should take, and who will take those actions. The Chair thinks the next meeting should be used to close the circle and create a final proposal, approve that proposal, and submit it to the Town Council, Planning Board, and the Town Administrator to take appropriate action (which may include zoning changes or repurposing to facilitate development). Steve Fournier will provide a copy of this report to members of the Planning Board and copies of Chapter 6 of the Master Plan to all EDC members.

Adjournment:  **ACTION**

Motion: **Val Shelton** moved to adjourn the meeting

 Second: **Jay Dugal**

 Vote: Approved 8-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM
The next meeting is scheduled to February 10, 2014 at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary