

Town of Waldoboro
Economic Development Committee (EDC) Meeting Minutes
Municipal Building - 1600 Atlantic Highway
November 12, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** - This meeting was not called to order since there was no quorum. **Members present:** Town Manager William S. Post, George Seaver, Planning & Development Director Patrick A. Wright, and Elaine Abel. **Residents present:** Jen Merritt, Bill Pacy, Ted Wooster, Bob Butler, Tom Hammermeister, and Robert Weintraub.
2. **Approve and sign minutes from 6/11/09, 7/9/09, 9/10/09, and 10/8/09** - No quorum.
3. **Brief citizen comment (items not on agenda)** - Bob Weintraub was present for comment. He noted that resigned as the WBA representative on the EDC since he thought it was not the proper place to be advocating positions when he didn't know if the WBA wanted to be an advocacy group. But he feels strongly, based on his experience and also as a local farmer which is a not currently represented on the EDC, that he should be considered to fill the other vacant space.

He attended the last regular session of the Board of Assessors and in review of the Board of Assessors' issues on property tax on renewable energy assets installed on a location. There appears to be a disconnect as regarding a disincentive of local businesses, new businesses, or stakeholders for installing renewable energy assets. The present methodology seems to indicate that there is support from the State but there is not a transparent process for the stakeholder to pursue and that the Town will have an additional burden after the first year of any granting of the Board for a rebate for using or installing renewable energy. The EDC needs to look at ways and means to encourage businesses and stakeholders to use renewable energy, and as a policy would make a good selling point for opening a business in Town.

We have discussed an easy list of how to do business and why to come to Waldoboro and streamline our ordinances and simplify our permitting processes. However it does not seem to be transparent, as in a welcoming pamphlet, as how to live in and work within the forms and processes of Town for new and existing stakeholders. This is something that needs to be addresses with the WBA and Local Realtors. As an example, we have a form we submit to Darryl describing what our property is, but sometimes in the course of what we are doing, on a daily basis, we don't calendar, and by April 15th, things change and we need to notify Darryl of those changes. So when I came to town, and the real estate agent gave me my welcome brochure, it really didn't give me an idea of what types of forms or processes I have to be made aware of.

At the Board of Assessors meeting a stakeholder brought up the issue of not being able to qualify for a State refund process because the State does not follow the same

formula that the IRS does when determining Adjusted Income. The effect of rising Property Taxes and the State's dis-allowment of income exemptions can and does negatively affect town stakeholders and will drive them out of Town. The question then becomes one of how does this effect attracting new business to Town, and whether this is something we need to have further discussion.

It is becoming clear to me that there are many mandated burdens that will and do place financial hardship on Town stakeholders. I believe that the EDC needs to address this and form a positive message as to how Waldoboro is the best place to live and do business in Maine.

On a more positive note, would the EDC consider recommending to the Board of Selectmen a design competition for visions for Downtown for small fee, with the criteria to be formulated by the Downtown Revitalization Task Force.

4. **Update on committee work regarding visioning, marketing, committee action, if needed** - The amendment to the Land Use Ordinance Schedule of Fees was approved by the Board of Selectmen at their last meeting. Abel will release this information to the press.

Wright attended the career fair at Johnston & Wales Culinary School and noted the Town received a lot of positive feedback. The Town Manager added it is important to maintain the relationship with the School.

The suggestion of having photos of the Town instead of the blank walls at the Town Office has come to realization. A picture taken by Seaver now hangs behind the table in the conference room. This is a scenic picture was taken in the vicinity of 700 Bremen Rd. Abel, Seaver, and Wright will work out the details of a contest to have people submit their photos for publishing. We will also put information on the website. Merritt noted we should also get pictures to reflect the people / kids in town. This would include young families, old families, school pictures, etc.

5. **Discussion – Tri-Fold Brochure or other materials advertising Waldoboro** - Abel thought we should look at who the audience is for the brochure. She has a draft, making some assumptions as to the audience. Seaver feels the purpose should be why you would want to live here, thinking that people will bring their businesses with them. Wright agrees we should target the business owner. Things to add to the brochure include phrases from the citizens collected from a previous exercise and a short historical paragraph.
6. **Discussion – Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - Generally, the concept here is any improvements a developer would make to a business property in a certain District, would increase their taxes, but the increase would be used to benefit the developer in their District, for a period of years. These funds could be used for a parking garage or

something to that nature or other economic development efforts. This is a win-win situation for the Town, businesses, and residents. The increased valuation is tax sheltered. The consensus of the attending the Committee members was to move forward with the TIF.

- 7. Confirmation of Waldoboro Village Task Force** - The Economic Development Committee is pleased that 11 interested stakeholders requested to be on a Downtown Revitalization Task Force. In order to manage the functionality of that group, the Committee is recommending that the Task Force comprise of no more than 7 people. Creating a core group was a difficult task. The committee by no means wishes to turn away helpful hands, but realizes that there can be diminishing value with a Task Force as numbers grow. It is recommended that the Task Force reach out to these interested individuals, and others informally to help steer the group's recommendations.

The Task Force will be formed to achieve a discrete goal: Make specific recommendations to the Economic Development Committee on Downtown Revitalization Actions. These recommendations should include:

1. Resources necessary to accomplish the actions, and
2. Specific steps to be taken.

The purpose of the group will be to further research ideas that have been brought to the surface by the committee, downtown business owners, the WBA, and other stakeholders. These include, but are not limited to: Creation of a Downtown Tax Increment Financing District, Creation of a Downtown Master Plan, Building Façade Improvements, Cooperative Marketing, Construction of a public park in the village, Better Signage in Rt. 1 Corridor, Pedestrian and Parking Improvements, Designating Main St. as Business Rt. 1, and Town Administration of Services.

The members of this Task Force are Joe Carey, Jeff Hurd, Bob Weintraub, Yvette Bouchard, Caren Clark, Harry Cabot, and Ted Wooster.

The group is encouraged to consult with Patrick Wright, Planning and Development Director to inquire about certain grant programs, important contacts, legal requirements, planning practices, and regulatory restraints.

Bill Pacy noted the view downtown has not really changed in over 100 years besides the tarred roads. Many of the buildings on the block are vacant. A suggestion would be to offer the rent for free to startup businesses for a period of time, and maybe reduce the taxes for the property owners. He also thought there should be more signs, more parking, maybe first floor painting and matching awnings, removal of decrepit or dangerous buildings, and more street lights. Shrubs, flowers, and flags would liven up Atlantic Hwy.

Merritt asked them to make a list of these ideas and submit it to the Task Force.

8. New Business

9. Summary & Items for Next Agenda

10. Adjourn - The informational meeting ceased at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2009 - 4:00 p.m. at the Town Office Meeting Room.

Economic Development Committee:
Waldoboro, Maine

Absent _____
John T. Blamey, Chair

William S. Post, Town Manager

Patrick A. Wright

Respectfully submitted,

Absent _____
William "Bo" Yerxa

Michael C. Ducharme,
Administrative Assistant

Absent _____
Dana Dow

George Seaver

Elaine Abel

Vacant

Vacant