

EEC Minutes, 7/12/17

Attending: Sue MacKenzie, Dee Scanlan, Mike Smith, Jonathon Voegelé, Earl Strout, Manton Copeland, Chris Ramsden, David Schafer, Nils Johnson

- Called to order at 7:10
- Amendments to last meetings' minutes discussed and agreed upon
- Mant asked Nils to chair in his stead due to Nils' degree of experience; Nils accepted but noted that he'd only be attending meetings sporadically; motion for Nils and Mant to co-chair was moved and passed
- Nils summarized his experience with a similar situation in Ohio; town of 15,000 created community-based plan for increasing tax base; built library and worked with township to extend sewer to projects on the outskirts of town
- Mike explained the town's strategic plan follows outline laid out by the state; Earl was on the related committee with Mike and noted that it is a difficult situation in NH because the state itself is low on resources
- Mant noted that the Lyme Foundation had a similar community-lead meeting to the one in Ohio described by Nils
- Mike said we need to show that this tax increase (average on 4% per year for the past several years) will last, it is possible we're in a bubble due to high school costs and road costs that will eventually die down
- Dee asked for clarification on the goal of publication written by David; David suggested a focus on the Rte. 10 corridor; Mike said we'd need to update the Master Plan by polling the town on preferences for development
- Nils noted the recent flood exposes the need for more town revenue
- Mike noted the town already has three bonds and cannot bond the possible 2-3 million dollar gap in flood repair coverage, need to start a town-wide conversation and release a questionnaire
- Earl has discussed senior housing with a few people and will continue to follow up in order to find out what's needed to make that a viable option
- Mant gave the example of his experience with building a house to illustrate how extremely tight regulations are in town
- Mike and Earl described the Capital Improvement Program that was instituted by the Budget Committee based on state recommendations; they had tried to lessen the fiscal burden on the town by spacing projects apart and not doing too many things at once; program was supposed to be reviewed but never was and is now stagnant
- David mentioned that we need to focus on revenue; one possibility is to target restrictive zoning on Rte. 10 corridor and then more generally
- Sue read the committee's charge aloud upon request
- Chris called the Planning Board and spoke to Amber but she was not aware of the EEC; Chris noted we'll need to introduce ourselves in a positive tone and be careful not to step on toes

- EEC charge does not mention housing; Sue explained that there had been the intention of having a separate committee to address housing but that the Planning Board offered to take it under their purview and add a section about housing to the Master Plan
- Jon asked if we are just focused on business and noted that the charge may need clarification
- Nils said we shouldn't be reticent about our interest in garnering taxes for the town
- Mant noted that the bulk of tax revenue comes from large estates in the hills; more such houses would bring in the most revenue with regard to housing
- Jon asked if we can promote vacation homes as a possible balance between tax dollars earned and spent
- David noted that condominiums bring in couples without children; Earl said that's often not the case; Chris said the data will tell us this and asked if we have an inventory of businesses in town
- Earl noted that his building seems to only attract interest from those in Lyme and north of town
- Nils asked what the town itself owns that could be sold or leveraged
- Mant explained that Lyme Computer might have to move due to difficulties in attracting staff to their current location; many young professionals prefer to live in the cheaper/livelier West Leb area and don't want to commute so far
- Lyme needs PR to let businesses know that we're here
- Action Items: David will work on document and send it out for edits; Nils will look deeper into Rte. 10 corridor; Earl will look at senior housing; Mant will talk to people at Tuck about possibly involving business students in our dilemma; Chris will send his action items out later.
- Next meeting scheduled for August 16th, 7pm
- Meeting adjourned at 8:30

Respectfully submitted by Dee Scanlan