

TOWN OF SALEM NH

Economic Development Action Committee

Friday, March 1, 2019
Meeting Minutes



The minutes of the March 1 EDAC meeting were submitted on 3/24/19 by Wayne Pilla.

The Economic Development Action Committee held a meeting at 7:30 AM on Friday, March 1, 2019 at Salem Town Hall, 33 Geremonty Drive, Salem, NH.

Meeting Attendees: Chair Gene Bryant (GB), Vice Chair Michael Banks (MB), Secretary Wayne Pilla (WP), Carla Billingham (CB), Planning Board Rep Paul Pelletier (PP), Selectmen's Rep Lisa Withrow (LW), Community Development Coordinator Karri Makinen (KM) and Intern Katharine Labrecque (KL). Community Development Director/Assistant Town Manager Andre Garron (AG) was double booked but joined the meeting at 8:26 AM.

GB called the meeting to order at 7:38 AM and asked if there were any changes, additions or deletions to the minutes of the February 1, 2019 meeting. Hearing none, MB made a motion to approve the minutes as written, LW seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

GB welcomed KL to speak about her work changing the work force housing (WFH) ordinance with Ross Moldoff. New Hampshire currently has the 2nd highest median age in the country and vacancy rates are very low with little open housing at or below \$300k. They are working with the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast and the Regional Economic Development Center to have them host a community panel discussion or workshop and KL would like the committee's feedback.

LW asked if KL was suggesting the need for apartments or houses and KL responded that we need both. GB suggested the "starter home" market may be in short supply because the natural ebb and flow of seniors moving out and young family's moving in has been slowed by the high cost of senior housing. KL said they are working with the Office of Strategic Initiatives to figure out the best way to incentivize developers to build WFH. Density bonuses are being considered. MB asked if the state was being helpful and KL stated that they have. The federal housing trust fund of about \$5 million/year is in play. Steve Lewis has used a lot of HUD's low income housing credits to help fund his projects. NH has a housing trust fund but it has not been funded yet.

LW offered a move should be made to switch from senior housing to WFH and noted that they have a cap on how much a property can sell for, so homes that start affordable stay affordable. KL also noted there could be income restrictions on this type of development. PP suggested zoning changes that would allow more duplexes. MB asked whether the need is rental units or small houses and KL said many millennials are more interested in renting in order to maintain mobility. There are starter homes in the area, but the cycle of people moving up as they age and ultimately to senior housing/communities has stalled. Texas is using Habitat for Humanity to flip houses and refurbish old buildings. LW noted there may be a federal program that allows people to invest their tax refund in a fund that would be used to redevelop low income areas.

KL asked how to educate the community about why this is important and beneficial for Salem. GB noted there is a vocal contingent of citizens that will fight anything that will bring additional students, costs or

change in general. A response will need to be crafted that answers their objections. LW suggested we can hear all those objections by going over the Steve Lewis project meetings. KM said there are studies related to wages and rental prices that may help define what type of WFH we need based on whether our needs are housing for teachers, firefighters, administrators or dish-washers. GB noted that our goal is to get the community accepting of the concept in general. There will always be opposition to specific projects based on the NIMBY philosophy. People need to understand the current situation is negatively affecting both the service we receive and the prices we pay every day. Joe Faro will be speaking at the Chamber's Economic Development Breakfast in April. Tuscan Village could be a boon to the community but the businesses are going to have a hard time finding staff. KL spoke of zoning to allow people to rent a room and have in-law apartments.

The Depot Checklist:

MB reported that the adopted depot plan from 2011 did a good job of framing the depot area including the identification of necessary zoning changes, defining the ring roads and the quadrants. KM sent this plan out once or twice and will send again. VHB did a good job on this and the town used that report to create a town document that goes into zoning requirements such as parking in the rear, curb cuts and building heights and also detailed prohibited uses. Each quadrant would have its own specialized uses. Ring roads and zoning were the highest priority items in the reports. The Southeast quadrant ring roads will be the most difficult to accomplish due to wetlands and residences. KM believes the DOT is committed to making the ring roads a reality so this may not need to be a focus for the EDAC. GB would still like to see it included in our timeline and development possibilities.

Step 1 should be to update the original plan, starting with a new vision of the area that incorporates the changes the area has seen since 2011.

Other Depot Notes:

- Surveys as well as business and residential feedback from 2011 may now be outdated and in need of refreshment.
- A recommendation should be made that the TOS purchase the old China Star property.
- The Liberty Utilities property is not available at this time. Utilities don't sell properties.
- Abandoned gas station: The owner added new tanks and pumps and attempted to purchase a small Main Street lot from the town to gain an entrance and exit on Main Street, but the town does not seem to want a gas station in that space.

GB called for a motion to adjourn, LW motioned to adjourn, CB seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 AM.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2019 at 7:30 AM at the Salem Town Offices.

END