

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES
December 4, 2015**

The meeting convened at 7:40 a.m., at City Council Chambers, 37 Green Street.

PRESENT: Christopher Carley, Councilor Champlin, Mr. Hosmer, Councilor Keach, Councilor McClure, Bill Norton, Councilor Todd, and Claudia Walker

ABSENT: Councilor Allen Bennett, Tim Bernier, Stephen Heavener, John Hoyt, and Robert Carey

STAFF: Matthew Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects
Donna Muir, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS: David & Laurie Rauseo

1. Minutes of the November 20, 2015 meeting

Mr. Norton moved to approve the minutes and Councilor Champlin seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Review of the Draft Economic/Business Development Strategies Report

Mr. Carley explained that the purpose of today's meeting is to make any final changes to the draft Economic/Business Development Strategies Report. Once EDAC accepts the report, it will be placed on the December City Council agenda.

EDAC discussed changes to the second to last paragraph on page 2 of the report. It was decided that the first sentence would remain unchanged while the remainder of the paragraph would be separated into two bullet points. Other minor changes to the wording were agreed upon, as was the order in which the bullet points would be presented. The adopted bullet points will read as follows:

1. Create and implement a 3-5 year economic development plan for the City that would provide the roadmap for the City's efforts to stimulate its tax base and create skilled jobs.
2. Create an economic development director position, which would be charged with implementing the City's economic development strategy in accordance with best practices. Duties would include, but not be limited to, business retention, development, and recruitment. EDAC felt that it is imperative that the position be provided adequate financial resources and be appropriately empowered to effectively carry out its mission. EDAC was undecided as to whether this position should be housed within City government or within an outside entity.

It was agreed that strategies # 1 & 2 under Goal # 1 would be deleted, as they are no longer necessary with the changes outlined above.

Much discussion focused on an email that was sent to EDAC members from Tim Bernier. Ms. Walker stated that there was merit to Mr. Bernier's assertion that the City previously employed an economic development director

who didn't necessarily have the audience of City management and that the City should look to developing this position at a non-profit organization. Ms. Walker believes that this position should be a City position because an outside entity would not necessarily treat City ideas or requests as more than simply suggestions.

Councilor Keach opined that if the economic development director was a City position, that individual would not have a regional focus.

Councilor Todd stated that there are models for economic development positions based within a city structure. He appreciated Mr. Bernier's comments, but feels that EDAC needs to remain focused on what they were tasked with and be sure that the report provided to the Mayor was clear and concise and outlines EDAC's thoughts and suggestions. Councilor Todd stated that he believes that the issues with the previous economic development director were because it was a different time with a different City management.

Ms. Rauseo was recognized by the Chair and addressed EDAC members. She provided a recent example of a business that was a tenant in a Concord building and was looking to build a new building. This business was looking at a property in Canterbury and the Rauseo's talked them into coming back into Concord, helping Concord's tax base. Ms. Rauseo felt that it is important to have a position in the City who would be a single point of contact and would be able to talk with prospective businesses and work to attract people.

Councilor Champlin agreed that Mr. Bernier's email had some merit, but that Mr. Bernier spends a lot of time in from the planning and zoning boards, and that the permitting process is not the driving force for this report.

Mr. Norton stated that he does not agree that the economic development director is a city function. It should be a position that addresses a larger community.

Mr. Carley suggested that ultimately the decision regarding economic development rests with the Mayor and City Council and that any economic development needs to be done collaboratively.

Ms. Walker explained that economic development has to be done in a way that provides the most benefit to the City of Concord. As an example, Ms. Walker said that if a company was undecided about whether to move to Bow or to Manchester, it would be in Concord's best interest for that company to be convinced to move to Bow.

Mr. Carley stated that Mr. Bernier's email also implied that traffic planning is not being done as a matter of routine.

Mr. Walsh said that he had a conversation with Mr. Bernier regarding the comments about traffic. Mr. Bernier is concerned that the City is removing capacity of major roadways within the City which is not good for bringing people into the City. Mr. Walsh explained that transportation planning in Concord, per the City Council's direction for the past several years, has been a balance approach which considers roadway capacity needs, multimodal options, neighborhood impacts, as well as safety issues.. The comments that Mr. Bernier made are discussed as a matter of routine and many of these changes are planned years in advance.

Councilor Todd concurs with Mr. Walsh's comments and agrees that the City takes a holistic approach to traffic planning and that there have been many changes made over the years that have improved traffic.

Councilor McClure said that Langley Parkway was a good example of long-range traffic planning.

Councilor Champlin moved to accept the final changes to EDAC's Economic/Business Development Strategies Report as outlined above. Mr. Hosmer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair explained that the next EDAC meeting was scheduled for Friday, January 8th, and Dennis Delay, an economist with the NH Center for Public Policy Studies, would be discussing the impact of refugees and immigrants on economic development.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Muir