



Town of Hopkinton

330 Main Street, Hopkinton NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 – www.hopkinton-nh.gov

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Hopkinton Town Hall

Members Present: Andrea Folsom, Jim Fredyma, Ian Hart, Alexander Pooler, Steven Whitley
Members Absent: Louise Carr, Sam Delgado
Public Present: none
Staff Present: Anna Wells, *Economic Development Director*

CALL TO ORDER

Ian Hart called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm in Hopkinton Town Hall.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from [September 6, 2023](#)

Alexander Pooler made a motion to approve the *Economic Development Committee minutes of September 6, 2023*. Steven Whitley seconded. There was no discussion. **Motion passed 4-0** (Ms. Folsom had not yet joined the meeting).

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Starry Starry Weekend

Ms. Wells relayed to the Committee that Discover Contoocook requested support for Starry Starry Weekend again this year in the same amount as last year: \$1,000.

At this time, Ms. Folsom joined the meeting.

The committee discussed their support of this event. Mr. Whitley pointed out the event brings people to Contoocook Village at an otherwise quiet time of year, supports our local small businesses, and heightens the profile of the Village as a destination. Mr. Pooler made the point that this event also supports local entrepreneurs that do not have physical storefronts. The group supports the idea of using the Community Relations and Outreach budget for this purpose, but would like to ensure the EDC logo is featured on all marketing materials. In addition, the EDC will likely decrease the amount of financial support as the event becomes more established and ideally self-sustaining.

Mr. Whitley made a motion to contribute \$1,000 to the 2023 Starry Starry Weekend event, requesting that the EDC logo is on the marketing materials, and that for future requests, the organizers make specific requests for funding so the EDC determine the appropriate funding level in future years. Ms. Folsom seconded. There was no discussion. **Motion passed 5-0.**

2. Conference and workshop report out

Ms. Wells and Mr. Hart both recently attended the NH Housing Finance Authority's *Housing and Economy Conference* and shared the following takeaways:

- Communities that do not provide housing for workers will lose workers. Examples that were cited from other towns included the Market Basket in North Conway that was built but can't open due to worker shortage and a Dunkin' in the same town that had to close for several months due to lack of employees. As a local example, the Every Day Cafe is not open every day because of lack of staff.
- A film series was previewed at the conference: [Housing Fact or Fiction](#). The group discussed the possibility of screening the films with the community, possibly in conjunction with the Housing Committee. Mr. Hart and Ms. Wells will coordinate.

Ms. Wells attended the [PlanNH Annual Conference](#). Speakers there emphasized the importance of providing 'amenities' in a town to attract businesses, citing as a prime example outdoor recreation spaces and a walkable town/city center.

Mr. Hart recently attended the [Radically Rural Summit](#) in Keene. He reported on sessions he attended on entrepreneurship, the arts, mentioning how lucky Hopkinton is to have 2 Villages as an art center for the town. He suggested inviting 2 Villages to a future meeting to learn about what they're working on and how the EDC might collaborate with them in the future.

3. Grant Opportunity: [Community Center Investment Program](#) (due November 30)

Ms. Wells relayed that with the assistance of Neal Cass, Town Administrator, an application was submitted for technical assistance funding to complete the CCIP application. Once that is approved or denied, they will proceed with the application. Ms. Wells expressed that she believes the project most likely to score well and has the highest potential for receiving this funding is George Park renovations.

4. Water/Sewer Expansion

The group discussed at length the variety of options that could be pursued to accomplish the water/sewer expansion. The group agreed on the need to have a discussion with the Contoocook Village Precinct about their willingness to expand their system. The sense of the committee was to hold off on engaging engineering services for new groundwater exploration on the west side of I-89 until those discussions happen. Ms. Wells will work to coordinate those discussions.

5. [TIF Districts](#)

Ms. Wells will provide draft language for a new TIF District in West Hopkinton prior to the Nov 1 meeting.

6. [Commercial/Industrial Construction Property Tax Exemption](#) (RSA 72:80-83)

Ms. Wells reported on her communication with the Henniker Town Administrator about how this tax exemption has been used there. It has been used twice in Henniker since 2020, in once case to build

self-storage units and in another case to purchase maple sugaring equipment. The feeling of the Committee at this time is not to recommend it to the Select Board for this upcoming Town Meeting. The option remains to adopt this statute at a future date.

7. EDC Budget

The Committee discussed changes to their proposed budget for the upcoming year.

UPDATES

1. Zoning Amendments Hearing Schedule - Tuesdays: October 17, November 14, and December 12

2. Riverway Park

Mr. Whitley made a motion to extend formal thanks and acknowledgement to the Department of Public Works for beautifying Riverway Park and the abutting parking lot. Motion was enthusiastically seconded by Andrea Folsom. All were in favor and agreement. **Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Strategic Objectives

Ms. Wells updated the group that she has been reformatting and reorganizing the EDC's objectives and will share them at the next meeting.

4. Grants

a. AARP Community Challenge Grant (Walk Audits)

Ms. Wells reported that the Walk Audits have been completed and she and Ms. Presti are coordinating writing the Walk Audit Report.

b. America Walks Community Change Grants (Oct 9)

The group agreed not to pursue this grant at this time.

5. Business Outreach

Neither member of the Business Outreach working group was in attendance, so the update was tabled to the next meeting.

6. Other Board/Committee Updates - none at this time

OTHER

Upcoming conferences & workshops:

- BIA Workforce Housing Forum, Wed, Oct 11, Manchester
- NH Fiscal Policy Institute Budget and Policy Conference, Mon, October 16, 8am-4pm, Concord
- NH 2023 EconForum (NH BEA), Wed, November 1, 8am-2pm, Plymouth
- NHMA 2023 Annual Conference, Wed-Thu, November 15-16, 9am-4pm Manchester

Upcoming EDC meetings: *first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm*: November 1, December 6, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Steven Whitley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Andrea Folsom. There was no discussion.
Motion passed 5-0.

There being no other business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wells

Economic Development Director