

**Town of Northfield, Municipal Building
Economic Development Committee Minutes
October 29, 2014**

Chair Donahue called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

I. Roll Call: Select board member Ken Goslant, Select board member Dennis Donahue, Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Zoning Administrator Michele Braun, Sam Anderson Central VT EDC, Leslie Striebe Go-Northfield, Caroline Stevens, and Kathleen Hoyt.

II. Public Participation: None

III. Action Items: Approval of minutes 9/24/2014 – Dennis Donahue stated that he did not call the 9/24/14 meeting to order as he was not in attendance. Dennis Donahue motioned to approve the minutes with the changes and Ken Goslant seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

IV. Discussion: V-DAT Report Update: Dennis Donahue recommended that the Committee get started on ideas mentioned in the VDAT report before it is finalized. Michele Braun added that the report is still in process and should be completed within the next few weeks. Michele also gave a summary of the various elements of the report. Dennis noted that one of the top recommendations is to develop an incubator space. Specifically, the recommendation is for a NU/NSB/Town partnership to use the space that NSB is leaving. Dennis added that he would like to see TDS go into NSB's office space, so that their building can be freed up for something that contributes a little more life to the Common. Sam Andersen suggested that the group look/consider a co-working hub similar to the one in Burlington. The Burlington hub received a sizable federal grant and has several exciting projects developed by people at the hub. Sam added that the Committee should contact Norwich and survey their office space needs and ask if they would use a co-working hub. At the last meeting, Dave Maxwell indicated that he would contact Norwich about this idea to see if they may be interested. Jeff will follow-up with Dave.

The report also identified the NU/Town partnership as a top priority and to get the Town Manager engaged with the International Town Government Association. Also, it should involve regular meetings with NU.

V. Next, Leslie Striebe stated that GO! Northfield continues to work on the Welcome Home initiative and plans to put program information in Topps bags. Leslie also noted that their next meeting is November 6 at the Brown Library. Dennis suggested that he and Ken attend their meetings to discuss common themes between the two groups.

Leslie stated that her group is also working on new entrance gateway signs for the Town, and has developed a sign design to resemble a covered bridge. She has an estimate of \$6,000 for the two signs and is for looking help with materials costs. She is also wondering who approves the final sign design. Leslie added that the goal should be to use local contractors and suppliers for the sign project. The group suggested using Front Porch Forum to get assistance with materials and design. Others suggested reaching out to Charlie Morse and Steve Martin for materials.

Another item in the report is a business retention program, including monthly calls from EDC members to business owners. It was suggested that the group consider monthly coffee meetings again. Sam Andersen mentioned that she would reach out to her contacts regarding the Topp's property and their plans for the store and the property. Jeff would also reach out to the store manager

The next item on the list is upgrading of the web site. Also, there was a question as to whether the Town can use EDC funds for a professional web site redesign? There should be a one-time upgrade to make the site cleaner and update the logo. Jeff will contact the Snelling Center, which is a Vermont based non-profit group that works with communities on many issues. The Snelling Center has assisted numerous towns with website upgrades at no-charge. The Snelling Center may no longer have the funds for the web site upgrade process; however, they can still provide technical assistance and names of web designers in the area.

- VI. Brownfield Area-Wide Planning** – Jeff Schulz stated that representatives from the VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have funds available to do a Brownfield Area-wide Planning Assessment of Northfield. The program includes an evaluation of existing environmental conditions, identifies land use features, identifies key brownfield sites, performs market studies, infrastructure and energy analyses, develop re-use scenarios, and implementation strategies. The program is at no cost to the Town. DEC Staff has asked that the Town put together a Steering Committee to guide the project. Jeff suggested that the EDC be the Steering Committee. The Committee agreed. The group also suggested sending out a press release to get more community involvement. Jeff agreed to prepare the press release.
- VII. Next Meeting:** The Committee set the next EDC meeting for November 19th at 6:00 PM.
- VIII. Adjournment:** Ken Goslant moved to adjournment at 7:35pm. Dennis Donahue seconded. Meeting adjourned 7:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk