

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 2, 2015**

The meeting convened at 7:30 a.m., at City Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord.

PRESENT: Tim Bernier, Christopher Carley, Councilor Byron Champlin, Brad Hosmer, John Hoyt, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Jan McClure, Stephen Heavener, Councilor Brent Todd and Mayor Bouley.

ABSENT: Councilor Allen Bennett, Robert Carey, Bill Norton, and Claudia Walker

STAFF: Carlos Baía, Deputy City Manager – Development
Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects
Donna Muir, Administrative Assistant

1. Minutes of the September 11, 2015 minutes

The Chair asked that the minutes of September 11, 2015 be reviewed for approval at this time. Councilor Champlin moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Tim Bernier seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Continued Discussion on the Mayor's Request for Economic/Business Development Strategies

The Chair reviewed the businesses that were contacted and invited to the business roundtable which will be held on October 16th at 7:30 a.m., at City Council Chambers.

Mr. Baia had previously compiled a list of additional businesses to be contacted by EDAC members as well. The complete list and the assigned EDAC member follows:

- Concord Litho (Peter Cook) – Chris Carley
- Concord Insurance Group
- Phoenix Insurance – Brent Todd
- Merrimack County Savings Bank (Ed Caron) – Claudia Walker
- NH Distributors (Chris Brown) – Tim Bernier
- Eastman Bank (Brian Lavoie) – Brad Hosmer
- TD Bank – (Tom Potter / Mary McLaughlin) – Byron Champlin
- Graphic Packaging (Christopher Maurer) – Carlos Baia
- Hinckley Allen Law (Pat McDermott) – Bill Norton
- Concord Hospital – Claudia Walker
- Jerry McCarthy – Claudia Walker
- Ben Kelly – Byron Champlin
- Walter Chapin – Byron Champlin
- Area 23 (Michael McNeil) – Byron Champlin
- BittWare, Inc. (James Bittman) - Carlos Baia
- Boyce Highlands, Inc. (John Lentine) – Carlos Baia
- Express Employment Professionals (Don Castle) – Carlos Baia

- Fibernext (Ryan Irving) – Carlos Baia
- Heritage Harley Davidson – Tim Bernier
- HL Turner Group (Gerry Blanchette) – Brent Todd
- Nobis Engineering (Nannu Nobis) - Chris Carley
- North Branch Construction (Kenneth Holmes) – Chris Carley
- Sanborn Head Associates (Charlie Head) – Tim Bernier

Mr. Carley suggested that all contacts be completed and the results of these contacts coordinated with Mr. Baia, no later than Friday, October 9th.

At the last EDAC meeting, members of EDAC created a list of questions to ask the businesses:

- Why are you in Concord?
- What are the challenges in Concord?
- What do you like about Concord?
- What would make it more attractive to you and your employees?
- What would make Concord a better place for you?
- If you could change one thing about Concord, what would it be?
- What would you tell the Mayor if he were here?
- What can the City do better?
- Are you interested in attending a business roundtable discussion?

Councilor McClure asked that two questions be added to the above list: What are the quality of life items in Concord that business leaders like for their employees and themselves? What other quality of life items would you like to see in Concord? Mayor Bouley suggested that those two questions may be a part of the fourth question to be asked.

The Mayor suggested that he would reach out to Bill Binne to see if he would be interested in attending the business roundtable, in light of his recent interactions with the City regarding his North State Street project.

Mr. Bernier suggested inviting Joe Spain and Cobb Hill to provide insight as well. Mr. Carley said that he would contact both.

A new schedule was created to ensure that the report to the Mayor and City Council be ready for the December 14th City Council meeting.

- October 16th Business Roundtable (it was suggested that this meeting be videotaped)
- October 30th Brainstorming Session (Carlos will see if facilitator is available for this session)
- November 6th Synthesizing the results of the roundtable and the brainstorming session
- November 20th Creating the first draft of the report to the Mayor and City Council
- December 4th Finalizing the report to the Mayor and City Council

Mr. Heavener inquired as to whether the report would be a list of deliverables. The Mayor stated that he would like the report to include short-term, long-term, and pie in the sky suggestions. He suggested that EDAC should start with a blank slate for where the City could go; everything can be on the table.

3. Business Incubator Update

Mr. Carley reported that discussions at the Chamber with Creative Concord have gone round and round. All incubators in the state have some financial backing, either with a local university or angel funding. It hasn't been clear from the discussions whether another incubator is needed. The Creative Concord group is looking to do a market study to find out whether a need exists for an incubator in Concord.

Councilor Champlin opined that it is important to see if Concord could sustain an incubator – maybe a medical technology incubator would be appropriate. He believes that the Work Nest resonated with the people in Concord, but that is shared work space, not an incubator. Coaching, mentoring, and business support are integral parts of an incubator, which isn't part of Work Nest.

Mr. Heavener stated that Capital Regional Development Corporation was asked to provide a recommendation to the Chamber regarding the feasibility of an incubator in Concord. He indicated that an independent analysis would be the best way to proceed. This feasibility study may be included as part of EDAC's Economic/Business Development Strategies Report to the Mayor and City Council.

4. Other Business

Councilor Champlin suggested that the lack of dedicated staff within the City hampers the City's ability to focus on economic and business development. Councilor Todd suggested that this position may not necessarily be a City employee. Councilor Keach stated that it could be advantageous for this position to be outside the City's employ, as an outside person would be able to look at more regional development.

Mr. Baia provided an update on the Main Street Project, stating that the project is on time and on budget. The construction is scheduled on the first phase of the project to be completed by Veterans' Day.

Councilor Champlin asked whether there were any impediments to restaurants and businesses having space heaters on the sidewalks, which would be a way to encourage outdoor activities in the winter months. Mr. Baia explained that there may be a fire issue and that permits for outdoor activities may have to be adjusted, as the permits currently end in November.

The Chair thanked Mr. Baia for hosting the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Donna Muir*