



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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*Economic Development Committee Meeting Notes
May 21, 2013
(Joint Meeting with Selectboard Invited)*

Attendees: Ron Pelletier, Donna Marsh, Gale Taylor, Tad Putney, John Carr, Susan Adams, Brendan Denehy, Peter Cook, Bob Rochford as well as Gary Chabot and Michael Bergeron from the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development.

The meeting started at 6:30.

Following introductions, Gary and Michael went through a 135-slide presentation. During the presentation questions were asked and Michael and Gary addressed them.

Key points made during the presentation:

- Financial and demographic issues facing the country and state mean the future will not be “business as usual”.
- Do not only focus on bringing new businesses to town; celebrate successes of current businesses and help them grow. Have an annual awards ceremony for local businesses, invite the press, and publicize success beyond the borders of Brookline.
- Create long-term relationships with Brookline businesses.
- Have one point of contact for current and prospective business owners; someone who asks the key questions that allow the town to assist the business; lead with the town’s strengths.
- Recruiting businesses to NH takes two years and results in a ratio of one success for every 20 leads.
- Have clarity in the approval process.
- Selectboard, Planning Board, and EDC must work closely together.
- Speed = success. Respond promptly to requests. Business decision time frames are in some cases half of what they were just three years ago.
- “Business excellence” demonstrated by town hall personnel.
- Add attractive welcome signs at key entry points to town.
- 80% of inquiries/leads begin at the town web site.

EDC Meeting Notes

May 21, 2013

Page 2

- Recommendations for town web site:
 - Have a map that shows Brookline's location relative to the region
 - Have more people, including children, in pictures on the site
 - Economic development pages:
 - Highlight key selling points of Brookline in bullet points
 - Answer the question: "What's in it for me?"
 - Add photos of town hall personnel and board members
 - Add text to board/employee web pages with details of what we are doing
 - Add a one page summary of the approval process for a new business, including steps, timeline and names of who is involved
- Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs) were discussed. Gary and Michael can provide more information on these if we are interested. Requires a minimal improvement to appraised value of property, approval of Selectboard (not town meeting) and can take as little as 2-3 months to complete. Allows business owner to get a NH business tax credit of up to \$40,000 per year for five years.

Notes prepared by Tad Putney