

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES of the Meeting of December 14, 2011

Present: Commissioners: Cyrus Settineri, Robert Kapusta, Robert Stanton, and Susan Patrick

Absent: Commissioners Genevieve Salvatore, John O'Neil, John DePalma

Advisor: Robert Gregory

Press: Brian McCready, NH Register

I. Chairman Settineri called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

II. Public Comments – None

III. Minutes

The minutes of the November 16, 2011, meeting was accepted as presented.

IV. Economic Development Activity

Mr. Gregory outlined the development activity in his report. Chairman Settineri noted that AVIT Technologies was a tenant in his building. Ms. Patrick said a cupcake store had opened in her building in Walnut Beach.

V. Correspondence

The Chairman noted the letter received from Ms. Perro and his response.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Broker's Showcase

Discussion was held. Locations suggested included Hilton Garden Inn, 500 Bic Drive, Showmotion and One New Haven Ave. April 17-18, 24-25 suggested as time frame. Speakers mentioned were the Mayor, Bob Scinto, Bob Smith, John or Lou Cerruzzi, and Joe Coci.

B. Plan of Conservation and Development - No Report

C. Building and Land Use

Chairman Settineri said that there was still a lacking of customer service in the department.

Jocelyn Mathiasen, Director of DPLU and David Sulkis, City Planner were present and recognized by the Chair. Ms. Mathiasen said our process has dramatically improved over the past two years, despite a significant cut in resources. She went on to say that the numbers that the Committee came up with related to our workload are simply false. During the time frame mentioned, the number of permits issued by the Building office has dropped by only 8% while our staff has been cut by 28%. Despite this, she said, we have managed to dramatically reduce review times and revision cycles. Ms. Mathiasen said we issue many permits the same day, over the counter. For the projects that require review, our current review time is about a week for most projects.

Ms. Mathiasen noted that work load in the department is still very high. In the last month alone, we issued over 200 building permits with a construction value of over \$8.5 million. She said we served over 500 customers at the counter. Wait times to see a building inspector have also been reduced.

Mr. Stanton said that the Milford process was more difficult than in many other towns.

Ms. Mathiasen said that comparisons to other towns where the building inspectors leaf through plans without checking them and do drive-by inspections, without making sure that the work is safe and to code are not fair. She said that the building code is there for a reason and she is proud to say that a project that is reviewed, approved and inspected by our building office is safe, of high quality, and a positive contribution to the City's built environment. Mathiasen said that while she agrees that the process needs to be fast, predictable, and customer-friendly, she does not believe that we should compromise the quality of the work that we do.

VII. Guest: Dr. Betty Feser, Milford Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Feser said that she had been on the job for 7 months and was impressed by the number of graduates who stay in

the area, the willingness of all to make the system better, and the pride in Milford and the school system.

She said the system has gone through a lot of instability but the staff is committed and excited. The system is good, Feser said, but she wants to make it better.

Her goals are to increase test scores especially in the high schools. Feser wants to offer more Advanced Placement courses and to increase SAT scores to better than the state average.

When asked about Platt Tech getting better scores than the Milford School System Dr. Feser said that it shows that the perception of tech schools is wrong. They are succeeding in the academic world as well as the technical world.

When asked about the economic comparison of Milford's per student high cost she said that many things go into the formula including Special Ed, which Milford handles mostly in-house.

Feser said she would like to look at long-term issues with a long-range task force of community leaders. The total number of students is declining so we must look at infrastructure.

Demographics show a 17-18% minority impact. She feels that diversity enhances the community. ESL is increasing.

When compared to other communities she has worked in she sees less involvement here from the business community. Feser looks to strengthen that partnership with business.

When asked about attracting good teachers Dr. Feser said Milford does not have a problem. Milford is actually laying off teachers. Tenure was another topic raised. She said there are problems with tenure. Suggestions have been made to limit tenure to 5 years and have evaluation tied to performance.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert B. Gregory