

LITCHFIELD PLANNING BOARD

September 23, 2008

Minutes approved 11/11/08

Members present:

Steve Perry, Chairman

Alison Douglas, Clerk

Leon Barry

Marc Ducharme

Frank A. Byron, Selectmen's Representative

Edward Almeida, Alternate

Carlos Fuertes, Alternate

Members not present:

Jayson Brennen, Vice Chairman

Mary Anne Geist

Also present:

Joan McKibben, Administrative Assistant

Steve Wagner, Nashua Regional Planning Commission, Circuit Rider

Agenda:

1. Economic Development Subcommittee

Introductions

Michael Bergeron, Business Development Manger for the State of N.H.

Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) Division of

Economic Development Power point presentation

**Kerrie Diers, NRPC review of the 2000 Litchfield Economic Analysis
recommendations and discussion of the role local government plays in
economic development, steps for the committee through May 2009**

2. Andrew Prolman to discuss:

a. Growth Management

b. Rezoning

c. Open Space Zoning

3. Any Other Business

- Weatherstone Drive discussion with Andrew Prolman

- Mayberry Impact Fee proposal

**- HB1260 Growth Management Ordinances and SB342 Development of
workforce housing, questions for discussion with Town Counsel on 10/7/08**

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Chairman Perry called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Chairman Perry appointed Messrs. Almeida and Fuertes as voting members.

1. Economic Development Subcommittee

Michael Bergeron, Business Development Manager, State of N.H. Department, Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) manager came before the Board and presented a power point presentation.

Mr. Bergeron talked about some of the reasons why companies move to N.H. and how the State recruits companies. He explained the divisions in DRED. They target different markets in industry such as manufacturing, high tech, biotech and medical, and financial. Mr. Bergeron: The key thing is not to waste time trying to attract the “big one” because that does not happen and usually not in a small community. The thing is to focus on the current customer base. Look at the customer base as to what they like or do not like, etc. 80% of the business expansion will come from businesses in Litchfield.

He further stated that the Town needs to take charge and have an ambassador, one who is good with people and has sales skills. He suggested sending a letter to the businesses recognizing those businesses. He said that there is a person in his office who can work with the Litchfield Subcommittee and coordinate company businesses. He also suggested creating a checklist of the approval process for new businesses explaining what the Town requires that they would have to do to get approvals. He said to keep it simple: here are the steps to get approval and provide names and phone numbers. It makes a difference when companies are looking at your community. He suggested taking a holistic approach. Also, he suggested having a pre-approval meeting with the customer to show good faith. Some of the things businesses might consider when moving to a town is how close is it to an airport, or how close to a highway, the quality of life issues, and they want excellent public schools, health units and low crime.

Talk ensued as to shovel ready sites, site consultants, etc. Furthermore, Mr. Bergeron said to focus on Litchfield’s strengths and always greet customers with a smile. Agriculture is one of the key businesses so focus on that. He feels the customer base would be agriculture and manufacturing, not office use, and development will be at the northern Litchfield on the Manchester line and southern Litchfield on the Hudson side and the development should be on the east side of Route 3A. “If you look at the history of Litchfield, agriculture was always on the west side of the riverside of 3A which was where the best soils were and the commercial activity other than agriculture was on the east side which is where the timber was and less good soils. The best interest of the Town would be to follow what the ancestors did, follow that format. Unfortunately, and my personal opinion, when the zoning was developed for the Town of Litchfield, they zoned it for agriculture and for industrial. It did keep out a lot of residential but I do not think agriculture farming is best use for industrial because you will end up like Merrimack. It is not best use for industrial. If you look at Merrimack, you have Route 3 and a mish

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2 mash of retail and all the land that was around the river taken for all kinds of stuff and it
3 is all mixed up. You have an opportunity to keep what is unique and valuable to the
4 Town of Litchfield. On the west side is currently used for agriculture and east for small
5 but expandable industrial parks and the way you do that you do not necessarily need
6 water and sewage because there are light assembly operations that do not need water and
7 sewage. You would plan it for availability of water and sewage if Hudson or Manchester
8 is able to expand the infrastructure to meet that demand”.

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10 He suggested upgrading the website and add a business feature, economic development,
11 phone numbers, photos, email addresses, etc. In summary, he said to pay attention to the
12 current businesses, be prepared for an opportunity, improve the website, meet companies
13 be business friendly, etc.

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15 **2. CTAP -** Kerrie Diers, Assistant Director, Nashua Regional Planning Commission,
16 talked about the CTAP SEED project. She handed out copies of her presentation. CTAP
17 is part of the I-93 Project to help 26 communities to deal with the expansion. Funding
18 was available to do projects and Litchfield is implementing its 2000 Economic Plan.

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20 She said the Subcommittee would evaluate what the capabilities are in the community
21 of doing some of those things listed in the 2000 plan and see what would be the most
22 impact and what would be the easiest to do. Look at economic development from the
23 planning perspective in improving the community by jobs, improving social and natural
24 environment income growth, look at it from a holistic approach, is it going to help the
25 community and target the agricultural sector.

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27 Talk ensued. Ms. Diers said also important is the quality of life and to take a look to see
28 if the regulations are clear, the timeframe, what do they expect and state up front what the
29 rules are. There are a lot of things we can do. The report in 2000 had over 50 suggestions
30 and not a lot of things have been done with the plan. Over the next couple of months, the
31 Subcommittee will take a look at the strategy, main goals of the program, provide a plan
32 and coordinate an approach to economic development that benefits all area residents and
33 try to increase jobs, tax base and preserve agriculture.

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35 The Subcommittee sent out thirty-three (33) letters regarding the meeting tonight. Mr.
36 Almeida read an email from Linda Jacobson who could not make the meeting. She is a
37 business owner. Two business owners were present: Rene Theroux (Optimum Building)
38 and Gregory Jeffreys (Land Surveyor). It was said to consider sending out a survey to
39 find out what the needs are for the businesses in Town.

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41 Ms. Diers said that there is Phase II of CTAP so there is another part of money available
42 to continue after May to 2010. She is hoping to do a project that would not need
43 maintenance, or that someone would have to be in charge of it. Something where you
44 would not need a paid staff to continue it.

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46 Attorney Prolman: The CTAP, the whole program, is generated on the concern about the

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2 growth with the expansion of I-93? Ms. Diers: Yes. Att. Prolman: What is up with 93?
3 My understanding is that a Federal Judge sometime ago said that the State of NH did not
4 study it properly and that there has been some settlement of some portion of the
5 development of 93 between the Conservation Law Foundation and the State of N.H. but
6 is N.H. going back redoing their studies? What is the update on 93?

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8 Ms. Diers: I believe they are. I think what they are allowing to go forward is the bridge
9 repair and maintenance and some of the things that needed to be done. I think they are re-
10 investigating some of the numbers. The CTAP part of it is still going forward. I think the
11 message from the DOT when everything was on track, okay we are ready, and we are
12 going to build. Att. Prolman: Is the CTAP funding there regardless of the time line of 93?
13 Ms. Diers: Yes.

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15 Talk ensued. Mr. Jeffreys said that Litchfield’s website is pretty good and he feels that it
16 is very important for businesses to have their own websites.

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18 Mr. Byron said that Litchfield is not going to attract big businesses because it does not
19 have the labor, the infrastructure, no labor pools, the ease of access, etc. The best
20 advantage is to leverage something off the bridge coming across the river at the north
21 end, maybe extend the sewage from Manchester into Litchfield, and try to start
22 something at the north end.

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24 At this time, there are four volunteers to the Subcommittee. Mr. Byron said he would
25 serve on the Subcommittee. Members: Kerrie Diers, Joan McKibben, Frank Byron,
26 Edward Almeida, and Steve Wagner. Ms. Diers to move forward with the Subcommittee
27 and report back to the Board.

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29 **3. Andrew Prolman**

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31 **Growth Management** - Attonrey Prolman did not speak on the Growth Management
32 issue because he said that he has “beaten the drum of growth management and I
33 understand you may be talking with Town Counsel and I would encourage the Board to
34 do something there.”

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36 **Rezoning Rolling Acres Lot 88** – Attorney Prolman did not speak about it except to say,
37 “As far as zoning work, that is a relatively simple task to put forth a zoning amendment
38 to do that and I guess the task of the Board in looking in that corner of Town do you want
39 and would you look at other properties to consider with that, or not, or maybe a portion of
40 that lot 88 but the zoning amendment is a pretty simplistic zoning amendment.”

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42 **Open Space** - Attorney Prolman presented the Board with a sample open space
43 ordinance he obtained from Milford. He asked the members to take a look at Manning
44 Sousa’s development off Route 3A, Serenity Estates, as a good example of open space
45 development. They are ½ acre lots with private septic, town water, a significant buffer
46 coming off of the Merrimack and a lot of open space, buffering around the perimeter.

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2 He suggested that if the Board is going to go with something like this, that it has
3 planners, engineers, and people to review the ordinance and provide their comments. He
4 believes an open space ordinance should have been done a long time ago. Mr. Barry
5 asked about farmland and open space development.

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7 Attorney Prolman: The uses of the open space or what could become of the open space,
8 so the question becomes do you want to set aside some open space to continue farming
9 but that can be tricky. You have a conflict of uses in very close proximity to one another.
10 You know if there is any spraying, fertilizing, do you want it 20 feet from someone's
11 backyard. You can but you need to think that through...it is designed that the ownership
12 of the open space could be something that is protected and not subdivided and have
13 created uses with it such as forestry or farming. The ordinance is designed as an overlay
14 district. In looking at this, the minimum lot frontage of 50 feet, density does not change
15 with an open space from the conventional. If I can get 20 lots in a conventional layout,
16 the cookie cutter, I get 20 lots in an open space.

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18 Talk ensued. Att. Prolman: If you do go down this road, one important thing you have to
19 understand these typically are done by yield plans. You set your density by a yield plan
20 where a developer, applicant would come to the Board with a conceptual layout of a
21 conventional subdivision, your basic cookie cutter and say I can get 20 lots on this project
22 and, therefore, I want my density for my open space at 20 and I will come back with a
23 redesign with the open space. What is important for you folks to know the more rigorous
24 you make that conceptual requirement, the yield plan requirement, the more difficult it
25 becomes the cost is driven up on the developer's end for that conventional. You do not
26 want to have the development to fully yield out the engineering plan because they are
27 only setting the density.

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29 All in all, the Board will be discussing this with Town Counsel to get his side. Most
30 members seem very interested in an open space concept.

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32 **4. Any Other Business**

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34 **Weatherstone Drive** - Attorney Andrew Prolman was asked about the status of
35 Weatherstone Drive. It was said that the road looks good and that gravel was added to the
36 driveways. Attorney Prolman said he has not heard any complaints from the abutters.

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38 **Impact Fee Proposal – Mayberry** - The Board needs to speak with Mr. Mayberry to see
39 what it would get for \$6,000 because there is not enough money to do the whole project.
40 Mr. Mayberry's quote is \$7,500.

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42 There being no further business, Mr. Perry **MOTIONED** to adjourn the meeting. Mrs.
43 Douglas seconded. Motion carried 7-0-0. The meeting adjourned.

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45 Lorraine Dogopoulos
46 Recording Secretary