



City of Rochester, New Hampshire  
Economic Development Department  
33 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867  
(603) 335-7522, [www.RochesterEDC.com](http://www.RochesterEDC.com)

Rochester Economic Development Commission  
Minutes – June 23, 2020  
Rochester City Hall Annex – Online Teams Meeting  
33 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH

**Members Present Remotely:** Jonathan Shapleigh, Troy Dillow, Janet Davis, Mark Hourihane, Kristen Bournival, Paul Giuliano, Kris Ebbeson, Whitney Bolton, Marsha Miller

**Members Absent Remotely:** none

**Others Present:** Mike Scala, Jenn Marsh, Blaine Cox, Julia Libby

- A. B and C: Chairperson Shapleigh read the preamble and called the meeting to order at 8:09.
- D. Roll Call attendance was taken.

**Meeting Agenda**

- A. Roll Call attendance was taken as part D of the preamble.
- B. Marsha made a motion to approve the May minutes as presented. Mark seconded the motion. Roll call was taken, all in favor.
- C. Jenn updated the members on the city functions stating that the City was open to the public in all departments except for the library. City Council held first in person meeting at the June Workshop meeting. The meeting was held at the community center due to having more space but they had difficulties with the sound system. They will be looking at holding meetings in their regular chamber soon, continuing with public input via phone, email or in writing. Other meetings are still being held virtually.

Jenn gave a business update stating that restaurants were open outdoor and with a 50% capacity indoors. She stated that businesses have really done a great job adapting to the new times. Troy noted his restaurant clients have seen increased sales since they have been able to slowly reopen. Marsha asked how many businesses have closed their doors, so far Benedict's and Magrilla's have shut their doors for good and JCPenney filed for bankruptcy with projected closing in September. There have also been a number of businesses that opened during the crisis, those include: Stonewall Kitchen relocated to the Ridge, Pepper's Landing, The Laughing Duck, The Makers Bazaar, CDB American Shaman, Body Soul and Wellness and a tattoo parlor.



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- D. Mike gave an update on the LDI project that is scheduled to build a building on Airport Drive. He noted the Governor and Council would vote on the project on June 24<sup>th</sup> in regards to the BFA loan. The land closing will happen once that approval is in place. He stated the REDC will receive all project invoices and will act as the intermediary for the project and the City Council. Once they have their certificate of occupancy the city will execute the loan with LDI. Mike will work with the REDC for a groundbreaking event.

Mike gave an update on another deal in the GSBP with a business named Prep Partners. They will be purchasing a lot from the city to build 150,000 square foot warehouse. 50,000 of that space will be available for lease. Mike noted that another company has purchased land in the park and will be building a 20,000 square foot building adjacent to LDI.

The City Council will vote to purchase the Hoffman Building from a Boston Trust that has been vacant for over 30 years at the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. The purchase price is \$350,000 and a phase 1 environmental study has already been done. That was completed through a grant that the Strafford Regional Planning Commission received and they will also be working on a market study through the same grant program. Jonathan asked if a letter of support from the REDC would be helpful and the members agreed that they should take a vote to provide such letter. Mark made a motion to have Jonathan create a letter and submit it to the City Council for the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting showing support of the purchase of the Hoffman Building. Marsha seconded the motion. Roll call was taken, all in favor.

Mike updated the members on the Scenic and Sallinger buildings. He noted the demolition portion of the project is starting this week and should be completed around July 24<sup>th</sup>. Once that is complete the sale with Chinburg will take place and the city is expecting them to submit an application for RSA 79E immediately after closing.

Jenn was asked to update the board on the wayfinding project. She noted phase 1 is almost complete. The large parking ID's were installed as well as some of the trail blazer directional signs. Public Works was installing the remainder of the post signs this week and the Route 16 Welcome to Rochester sign should be up in the next few weeks. Once that is complete, ED will work on phase 2. Jenn noted she would add wayfinding to the July REDC agenda.

- E. Jonathan reviewed all the priorities and goals.
1. Establish a loan committee: John Hall and Paul were added
  2. Reposition Underperforming Properties: this is continuously being looked at. The Hoffman and Scenic/Sallinger are great examples of current projects
  3. Visibility with Key players: The REDC started off on the right track but Covid has held them up for in person interactions but they noted they have some great projects going on now with CC.
  4. Invest in Neighborhoods: Jenn noted that there are some projects that

should be going before planning board shortly.

5. Downtown building owners: Jenn and Mike have been talked to a lot of downtown business owners recently about current projects. The REDC would like to hold a building owner meeting sometime in the fall if possible to discuss incentives, grants, current projects and to get feedback from owners.
6. Max impact on Skyhaven: Mike noted the PDA is adding Skyhaven to their website. Before Covid a food truck was looking for approvals to have a truck their daily for breakfast and lunch.
7. Zoning Recommendations: Jenn noted it wasn't a zoning change but staff will looking to revise the outdoor dining ordinance with City Council this summer. No other recommendations at this time.
8. Educational task force: Paul stated he has administrative access over GBCC in Rochester. He and staff are investing heavily in renovations to add a welding class in Rochester. He is also charged with the automotive program which he will be working with the CTC to get that back up and running.
9. Expand Ind. Parks: Jenn stated the City just subdivided the land at GSBP and have a few businesses moving in. The single lot left at the Ten Rod Road Park has also been purchased. Right now there are some lots available but if growth continues they may want to begin looking closer at this item again.
10. ROH: Marsha noted they were still closed but their summer program was opening at the RPAC in July.
11. Tax Base: REDC met with the Chief Assessor last year. No new updates
12. Retention and expansion: this will be covered in item F.
13. Exit 10 and Fairgrounds will remain as topics checked in on a few times a year.

F. Julia compiled information from the 30 businesses that the REDC surveyed last summer and fall. She reviewed the information with the board (see attached spreadsheet). Jonathan noted we should craft a follow up email to these businesses thanking them for their time.

Other: Marsha noted her husband and she wrote a grant to help restore the curtains that were in the East Rochester Fire Station.

Marsh asked about the public relations position in the ED Department. Blaine noted that staff will be working on getting the position publicized after the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in which CC will vote to approve/disapprove the job description. Paul also asked about the Director of Planning position in which Blaine said he hopes to announce by the end of the week.

Troy asked where the Barker Court purchase was in the budget. Mike noted that with the



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current situation and the budget freeze that this item as put on hold for now. Staff hopes to revisit this item within the next year.

G. Adjourn: Janet made a motion to adjourn at 9:35. Mark seconded the motion. Roll call was taken, all in favor (Kris Ebbeson did not vote as she jumped off the call a few minutes before end of the meeting).

Next Meeting is scheduled for July 28th at 8:00 am. Location will be determined with another, most likely this will be another remote meeting due to the pandemic.

## Business Retention Survey Summary

30 Businesses participated in the survey

### Business Background

Average of 30 years at current location highest being 106 and the lowest being 1.5

These 30 businesses employ 450 FT and 144 PT employees

19 said it was in their plans to hire in the next year for a total of 66 positions

2 businesses laid off in the last year, one laid off 20 and the other 1

### Sales

In the past year 12 businesses increased sales, 1 decreased, and 9 stayed the same.

In the past 3 years 17 businesses reported increased sales, 2 decreased, 4 stayed the same

16 businesses reported that they are prepared for a downturn in economy, 3 are reported that they are not

### Business Climate

Trends in location advantages were visibility, parking, and accessibility

Trends in location disadvantages were neighborhood issues with some of the foot traffic downtown and empty store fronts

Avg business climate rating was 3.41

### Labor and Employee Training Needs

Avg of 14% turnover rate really rough number, this includes a fast food restaurant with 150% turnover rate, some also didn't answer with a percent

18 businesses reported having trouble finding qualified workers, 9 said that there isn't

Only 4 people said labor skills would be changing all were to do with computer skills besides one that said physical labor

25 businesses offer training most of which is onsite a few said offsite, 3 said they do not

### Business Growth Barriers

Most common reported growth barriers were regulations and inadequate qualified workforce at 11.

Second was energy cost and construction costs, a few reported on taxes both state and local being a growth barrier.

### Moving Selling Closing

6 are moving closing or selling their business 2 for more storage and ware house, one moving across the street for better traffic flow, two were planning to sell

### Resources: Topics of Interest

Most popular topic of interest for resources is free resources to help grow business at 15, 8 are interested in how to get involved with city committees and 7 on info on how to expand or renovate

# Rochester Economic Development Commission

For 2019

Goals/Tasks/Projects:

Rank	Task/Project	Involvement	Description	Status	Point Person
1	Establish a Loan Committee	TBD	Create a loan committee and process to utilize REDC's authority as a lender	Ongoing	Jon, Kristen, Tory, Mike, John Hall, Paul
2	Reposition Underperforming Properties	REDC, ED Staff	Leverage funds and incentives to encourage rehabilitations, investments. Opportunity Zones, ERZ zones, 79e	Opportunity Zone portfolio to be developed	Mike, Troy
3	Visibility and relationship building with key players in the City	REDC, ED Staff	This includes our local government, local developers and resources	ongoing	All
4	Invest in Neighborhoods	REDC, DPW, Planning, CDBG, RFD, RPD, Mayor, CC	improvements in Downtown neighborhoods, water,	Housing Charette completed in the fall of 2018	Jenn, Julian, Kris, Mark, Janet
5	Downtown Building Owners Association	ED Staff, BZLS, RFD	Support a grass-roots organization where building owners can network and improve Downtown maintenance standards	Landlord Meeting on hold. Main Street workshop 2019.	Jenn, Kris
6	Maximize the Economic Impact of Skyhaven Airport	SAOC	Assist with the expansion of development opportunities with hospitality and restaurants to benefit the airport and the GSBP	Mike is on the SACC committee	Mike and Paul
7	Zoning Recommendations	REDC, ED staff Planning, BZLS	Support changes to density and parking requirements for Downtown - Bendon Adams Report	Ongoing	Michelle, Mike, Jenn, Paul
	Educational Task Force	Tech Center, GBCC, ED staff	Promote training and educational opportunities to small businesses. Encourage internships, job	check in a few times a year	Jenn, Paul, Marsha
	Expand Industrial Parks, Develop & Enhance Parks	ED staff, CM	GSBP expansion continuing, follow zoning discussions & advocate for industrial, plan for new parks and utilities	check on inventory a few times a year	Mike, Jenn

	<b>Support the Opera House Board of Directors</b>	REDC, Opera House Board	House on alliances to other performing arts venues. Support Performance & Arts Center	check in a few times a year	Kris, Marsha
	<b>Tax Base Analysis</b>	Jon Rice, CM	Maximize the fiscal benefits of tax base investments and stabilize the property tax rate - get Concord example from RKG	Invite Jon Rice to an REDC meeting	Jon Rice
	<b>Business Retention &amp; Expansion</b>	REDC, Mayor & CM, ED staff	regular visits to business and industry. Survey business needs. Schedule REDC meetings at business locations.	Ongoing project though 2019.	Jenn, Jen, Mark, Janet
	<b>Exit 10 &amp; Spaulding Turnpike</b>	ED staff, DPW, Mayor & CM	Exit 10 is supported by SRPC, will need regional support. Assistance by Albany & Safran, others.	still on 10 year plan	Mike, Peter N
	<b>Master Plan for Rochester Fairgrounds</b>	REDC, CM, Mayor, ED Staff	Work with RAMA on expanding entertainment options and potential	check in as needed	Jon, Mark





