

Economic Task Force Meeting

Minutes of

December 18, 2013

Attendees: Danielle Loring, Laurie Forbes, Sharon Dodson, Elissa Gifford, Mike McClellan, Teresa Sadak, Rolf Olsen

Call to Order 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes. Change Rolf's name and take off "e". Motion made by Laurie and seconded by Elissa. Motion passed.

Discussion of Survey Results. Surveys were handed out to the board members.

Danielle – emails sent to 31 businesses and followed up with postcards. 45 in total. 21 responses. Starting a business to 20 plus years in business. Raymond has a sense of quality of life...number 1 answer. People can really identify with that. Staff was very responsive and scored high. Ordinances and polices were an issue. A lot of people aren't familiar or haven't been exposed to our ordinances/policies. Issues...other...polices to help out with financing/supporting startup businesses. Natural gas and sewer were the two infrastructure responses. Which source of resources would help them most? Networking, financial/capital and regulatory issues. Which would not... staff. 3 major concepts...needing a staff person regarding economic develop...preservation of Raymond...molding ordinances to be more business friendly.

Elissa – would it be possible to think about offering workshops on ordinances and guidelines before appearing before Planning Board to help people? Same about regulatory issues?

Laurie – likes the idea of workshops and the networking idea. Meet and greet also.

Disaster Recovery plan....does Raymond have one...yes.

Towns usually implement a Disaster Recovery plan when large businesses leave a town (Danielle) to help recoup from the loss.

Are we self-limiting or are we open to any kind of business? Possibility of losing other businesses because of bringing in a certain business. Need balance of rural and suburban.

Mike – Quality of life means to him ...school choice...what does that exactly mean to people? It means different things to different people. Very important concept. Need to know those meanings.

Laurie...how important is that to people?

Rolf – According to the results, you have to look at all the numbers. Only 2 people said we have favorable business climate. How can we bump these numbers up? It points out an area that needs to be bumped up and how do we do it? How do we keep the positives but also bring up the negatives into the positives. Balancing it all out.

100 actual businesses...people that were locally administered. (Danielle went to the local people).

Rolf – follow up question...are you facing any limiting factors...this is what we need to look at. Need to know these. Some we can fix...some we can't. What are the areas we can do something about? What do we have the ability to look at and make recommendations on?

Laurie – Natural gas??? A big issue with people.

Rolf – If a big company came in that used natural gas...we would need to look at options of bringing in gas or use a local supplier. Would be better to go with a local supplier.

Sewer...could be very very expensive. A huge infrastructure move. Water would be simpler and easier to expand from what Raymond already has.

Laurie - Village Concept – likes the idea...town office with library/rec center/

Sharon - How do people feel about sewer and natural gas and water to be put on the town survey that SB is trying to put out?

Laurie – Guidelines – Are they bound by them even though they don't know about them? Yes. There is a process that brings them into the guidelines.

People aren't interested until they come up against the guidelines. They aren't interested until it becomes a problem for people. Could be the reason why so few people know about them.

Rolf – what is the vehicle we have to educating people? We need to be able to attract people and what can we do to make it easier for them? What do we have so people can research to know if they want to come here? We need to establish a procedure for informing/educating people.

Recommendation to the Selectboard that the position would be fully defined. Needs to be able to be consistently put in. In case someone leaves, it can be picked up and stay the same by the next person.

Business advocates would all have same packet of information. Library would be a great place to partner with the town for that (Elissa). Can hand out packets of information.

Education side of starting a business needs to be consistent with the answers...very important.

Any people turned away...landlord said pool hall didn't fit in demographics.

Sharon – on the 302 route...we need to have a higher income business to meet the criteria. Business has to be really sound.

Rolf - What do we have to do to get people to look here in Raymond?

Danielle - have a Raymond open house of all the spots that are available? How do we get them to look here? Have realtors, financial people, etc. here to help them decide if they want a business?

Rolf - Is that a recommendation that we want to make? Need to research who to invite and who would do that.

3 Possible ideas to recommend:

1. Have positions (liaison) at town office
2. Some sort of education guidelines
3. Have open Real estate showcase notes.

Laurie - What about having a Bank in Raymond? So is that a problem for businesses?

Mike – connects with the quality of life issues...having the conveniences... supermarkets, bank, etc.

How do we address the issues of the bank...(Key)...what will the next business have to do to be able to go into the building (can't be another bank). What are the obstacles of the next business coming into an already established place? If it is too hard or expensive, it is hard for Raymond to fix the issue.

Comp plan...business district needed to stay the same and the rural district stay the same.

Sharon - Doesn't think that is what the Comp plan intended. Look at comp plan for business district and needs to be readdressed. She doesn't feel they meant to have the difficulty there.

Rolf - One of the driving factors for comp plan was for low housing. How can we deactivate or modify the comp plan? Can we deactivate parts of it? Danielle said that Stephanie Carver from GPCOG said Yes. Rolf ... Asked how can we go about doing it then?

Sharon feels comp plan is being misinterpreted. Rolf says just take out the impeding issues if possible. Need to look at the areas that are troubling for people to do a business plan in Raymond

Sharon – Comp plan limits businesses.

Laurie - So, maybe it is worth looking at the comp plan and re-evaluating it.

4th recommendation Rolf – Our recommendation would be to take another look at the comp plan? Parking and change of use issues.

Elissa – Last year, these may not have been issues. We need to look at the whole thing.

Planning board is making their decisions because they are interpreting the comp plan their way. If we take away the issues that are restricting, then it opens up the planning board with their decisions.

Laurie - What do we do instead of a comprehensive plan?

Rolf - We go with ordinances. Ordinances are the law. Comp plan is not the law...just a guideline.

Meeting schedules:

Look at models that have worked...not ones that have not worked. March meeting to hammer out the final recommendations to put in final report.

Other concerns – Danielle to give out reports from tourism class she went to. MMA training which covered TIF information.

Motion to Adjourn. 7:45 p.m.

Recap:

Possible ideas to recommend:

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2. Some sort of education guidelines
3. Have open Real estate showcase notes.
4. Our recommendation would be to take another look at the comp plan? Parking and change of use issues.