

Town of North Hampton NH

Economic Development Committee Minutes

Minutes from March 7, 2018 [Video of Meeting](#)

Jim Better, presiding officer, called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

Members present were:

Kirsten Larsen Schultz

Phil Wilson

Nancy Monaghan (via phone)

Kathy Kilgore

Gary Stevens

Anthony Pastelis

Staff Present: None

Minutes:

- Item 1. Sewer Study: Phil Wilson provided a perspective on the Stachow report (attached)**
- Item 2. Tax Incentives: Interim Town Manager Michael Tully was not able to attend the meeting due to the impending snow storm. The item is moved to the April 4th EDC meeting.**
- Item 3. Code Enforcement Job Description: The subcommittee submitted the addition of a new paragraph. The Committee requests further discussion with town officials as to the nature of petitioner's submissions and who provides the 'customer service'. Michael Tully will be invited to the next EDC meeting along with appropriate town employees to further clarify who does what.**
- Item 5. UNH Business Retention and Expansion Resource: The committee would like to extend an invitation to UNH to present its program for town economic development. UNH will be at the next meeting.**
- Item 6. Acceptance of the minutes from the February 14, 2018 meeting: The EDC accepted the minutes but asked that the Stachow Sewer Study be added to the**

minutes and that the report, along with the Wilson observations, be added to the current minutes along with the Stachow study.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM

Respectfully submitted

Jim Better, Chair of the EDC

Reply to Les Stachow's Sewer Presentation
Phil Wilson
15 February 2018

The basic structure of this reply has two prongs -- an economic development prong and a water quality prong.

Economic Prong

- Les's recommendation/conclusion is that we need to start working on a multi-year process to enable the construction two miles of sewer service along Route 1 -- one mile south of the Atlantic Avenue intersection and one mile north of it.
- The economic benefit of this would be to provide the infrastructure for high-density development along this corridor.
- The failure of this prong is that there is no compelling evidence for concluding that high-density development is a good outcome for most of North Hampton's residents.
 - Yes, it would benefit a small number of property owners whose properties along Route 1 would increase in value because of their potential for high-density development, including for apartment complexes.
 - This begs the question: "What kind of development would likely occur?"
 - The EDC has already found that additional retail development in North Hampton -- except, perhaps, small, local businesses -- is not likely. Our proximity to Portsmouth and Seabrook and no direct access from I-95 make North Hampton unattractive for larger, chain-store businesses. (Cf., Unutil study, conversations with mall owner, and current presence of vacant storefronts.)
 - This sewer system would not help fill existing empty storefronts.
 - The most likely kind of development that would occur is high-density residential development -- primarily apartments like those in Hampton and Seabrook along Route 1.
 - High-density residential development is financially disadvantageous for North Hampton residents; an apartment complex does not provide tax revenue that equals or exceeds its costs in Town services (municipal and education).
 - High-density residential development also increases traffic throughout Town, requires additional depletion of our aquifers from additional population, and transforms the rural character of the Town.
 - Sewer bills for businesses can be costly to business owners, if they are individually charged for sewer service -- e.g., a charge for sewer per gallon of water consumed by the business.

Reply to Les Stachow's Sewer Presentation

Phil Wilson

15 February 2018

- If businesses are not individually charged, then the cost of sewer service, including repair and maintenance, is spread across the taxpayers of the town, as it appears to be in Hampton.
- The example of the current situation in Hampton *vis a vis* Smuttynose Brewery is important for North Hampton to keep in mind.
 - Hampton bent over backwards to attract Smuttynose to their town, largely because of the economic boon it appeared to offer. They even extended a sewer line to service the business.
 - Hampton's economic development committee secured a \$250,000 grant from DES to help build the sewer line to the brewery, and the owner was supposed to build a pretreatment plant with his own funds, but he failed to do so. Consequently, Hampton's wastewater treatment plant is currently inadequate to support the brewing facility.
 - Now, because this business proved *not* to be economically viable, Hampton residents are left with a large unpaid tax bill (~\$160,000), an over-taxed wastewater treatment system, and a business complex that nobody is willing to purchase because of the costs associated with running it.
 - Yes, as Les said, if North Hampton seeks Hampton's assent to connect with their sewer system, North Hampton "can sweeten the deal" by offering to help pay for necessary upgrades to the system.

But, at what cost to North Hampton residents versus potential benefits to our town?

- Why would North Hampton's residents want to help pay Hampton's \$41,000,000 bill to upgrade it's sewer system?
- Les's cost estimates for construction of this small-scale sewer system dramatically understates the costs of such a system. It omits on-going operating and maintenance costs, such as those included in the Underwood study and extra costs of laying sewer lines through wetlands, and it ignores the detrimental effects on both residents and businesses of putting a small wastewater treatment plant "somewhere near the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Lafayette Road."
- Conclusion: The disadvantages of high-density development, even on a two-miles-long strip of Route 1, far outweigh the benefits to the residents of the Town.

Water Quality Prong

- Les's argument is:
 - In the future, contamination of aquifers from septic system failures in North Hampton will likely require construction of a sewer system to prevent further contamination and, perhaps, remediate existing contamination.
 - Because it takes several years to plan, permit and construct a sewer system, North Hampton needs to begin the process now, including beginning talks with Hampton and Exeter/Stratham about connecting to their sewer systems and engaging the DES to moderate negotiations with Hampton.
- The failure of this prong is:
 - Les does not list among his recommendations that North Hampton can and should implement a rigorous septic system testing and maintenance program to ensure that septic system failures do not pose a threat to drinking water supplies in Town. This is a low-cost, relatively simple, and effective alternative.
 - The Underwood study made this recommendation, to which Les alludes in his presentation, but he omits this recommendation from his own list of options.
 - Rather, he jumps immediately to the conclusion that North Hampton needs to begin the process of planning for a sewer system now.
 - A two-miles-long sewer system on Route 1 will not protect aquifers from contamination in the vast majority of the Town.
 - It will only serve the strip along Route 1 where the sewer is constructed.
 - It will, in fact, deplete the aquifers because water consumed the high-density development in this strip will no longer be used to recharge aquifers after treatment.
 - Moreover, most contaminants of surface and ground water come from storm water runoff and some from wildlife, not failed septic systems. The proposed sewer system does nothing to treat storm water in the area it would serve or in the rest of the Town.
 - According to the Underwood study, the lowest cost way to deal with septage in a town like North Hampton is with septic systems, and properly maintained septic systems also conserve water resources.

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- Conclusion: Les's recommendation to proceed with planning for a sewer system to protect water quality fails to take into account the most cost effective and probably the most effective way to protect our groundwater supply.

Conclusion

I do not think it is prudent to begin going down a path to install sewer anywhere in North Hampton. Once, a system were installed, North Hampton would be permanently and irreversibly transformed without a commensurate benefit to residents.

Report of the EDC Nuts & Bolts Committee February 24, 2018

Committee members Kirsten Larsen Shultz, Kathy Kilgore and Nancy Monaghan met February 23, 2018. The assignment to this committee was to review the job description for the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer and determine the following:

What language might the Economic Development Committee suggest that the Town incorporate into this job description to stress customer service.

The Nuts & Bolts Committee recognizes that the EDC has no authority over or responsibility for Town job descriptions, and that authority lies solely with the Town. Given that any request from the EDC would be simply a suggestion, the Nuts & Bolts Committee unanimously recommends the following paragraph be inserted on Page 1 of that document after the first paragraph under ROLE DESCRIPTION:

The BI/CEO shall assist all applicants by explaining the Town's applicable rules and regulations and shall help facilitate the process. This includes but is not limited to explaining to applicants all the options available to them and working with them to help achieve their goals. When Zoning or Planning Board approval is anticipated, the BI/CEO will direct applicants to the Planning and Zoning Administrator for further assistance.

(See the attached first page of the job description with this paragraph inserted in red.)

The Nuts & Bolts Committee further recommends that a simple "Guide To Doing Business in North Hampton" could be developed and placed on the Town and NHBA websites. Following the February meeting, Nancy Monaghan had developed a one-page "guide" for landlords to give to all new tenants that directs them to the BI/CEO and the P&Z Administrator. It was suggested we could use that or build on that. That one-page guide relieves landlords of the burden of having to answer questions on permits

and so forth, and it gives all new business owners a simple and clear path to get their questions answered and the proper permits applied for.

This “guide” was created given that:

- Small businesses do not know what they need until they ask the people who know what they need – the Building Inspector and sometimes the Planning and Zoning Administrator
- Landlords don’t always know the answers to new tenants’ questions and can easily guide them by handing them this one-stop guide. Many small businesses renting a storefront do not need Zoning or Planning Board approval. If it appears they do, the Building Inspector is familiar enough with the Zoning Ordinance to direct them to the Planning & Zoning Administrator for further assistance.
- Larger businesses and their professionals know what is needed and where to go.
- ALL businesses must go to the Building Inspector anyway, because sign permits are required for all businesses large and small.
- It eliminates confusion from the beginning of a new tenant’s business startup and sends them straight to the people who have the answers. And it provides landlords with a tool to assist their new tenants.

That “guide” is also attached.

TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NH (“Town”) BUILDING INSPECTOR/CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

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ROLE DESCRIPTION:

Reporting to the Town Administrator, while acting largely independently, and combining the work of Building Inspection and Code Enforcement, the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer (“BI/CEO”) objectively, consistently, effectively, and efficiently executes work required to ensure that all construction, site preparation or alteration, and land use complies with applicable statutes, Zoning Ordinance provisions, regulations, building codes and standards and with relevant decisions of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment (“ZBA”).

The BI/CEO shall assist all applicants by explaining the Town’s applicable rules and regulations and shall help facilitate the process. This includes but is not limited to explaining to applicants all the options available to them and working with them to help achieve their goals. When Zoning or Planning Board approval is anticipated, the BI/CEO will direct applicants to the Planning and Zoning Administrator for further assistance.

“**Building inspection**” includes managing and executing work flows from initial contact with applicants for Building Permits or Certificates of Occupancy or for actions by the Planning Board or ZBA; to advising them about whether applications require special actions (such as variances, special exceptions, sign permits or other approvals), to approving or rejecting applications and issuing permits, to performing requisite inspections and approving certificates of occupancy for approved projects, to keeping accurate records that are readily available and accessible by the public, and to reporting on all work performed, as specified by the Town Administrator or requested by the Select Board, Planning Board or ZBA.

“**Code enforcement**” includes managing and executing work flows to investigate and resolve perceived or alleged violations of applicable statutes, revisions of the Zoning Ordinance and land-use regulations, building codes and standards, and non-compliance with decisions of the Planning Board or ZBA, as well as conditions placed on those decisions, including maintaining thorough and accurate records of complaints and actions, ensuring that all records are readily accessible by the public, and reporting on such as specified by the Town Administrator or as requested by the Planning Board or ZBA.

New Business Guide

Welcome to North Hampton's business community! Any questions you have about town regulations and permits needed can be answered quickly with one trip to Town Offices to see the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector.

Permits and general questions

*Glen Bosworth, Code Enforcement Officer
603-964-8650*

E-mail:

Town Offices, 233 Atlantic Avenue

*(Park behind the fire station, enter the main door,
take the elevator to the second floor)*

Hours: Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

NOTE: All signs require a permit

*****If your business needs any approvals from the Zoning or Planning Boards, Mr. Bosworth will direct you to Rick Milner, who sits right next to him.**

Zoning and Planning Approval

*Rick Milner, Planning and Zoning Administrator
964-8650*

Email: rmilner@northhampton-nh.gov

Town Offices, 233 Atlantic Avenue

*(Park behind the fire station, enter the man door
take the elevator to the second floor)*

Hours: Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.