



CITY OF CONCORD
New Hampshire's Main Street™
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDAC)
MEETING MINUTES
January 28, 2025 @ 5:00PM
City Council Chambers
37 Green Street (2nd Floor) – Concord NH 03301

Attendees:

Committee Members:

Mike Vlacich, Chair, Mayor Byron Champlin, Ali Sekou, Mayor Pro-Tem, Chuck Gilboy, Ari Pollack, Bobby Segal, Patrick Tompkins, Alex Stoye, Emily Ricard, Jean Hakuzimana (arrived 5:31), Michelline Dufort, City Councilor Judith Kurtz

Absent Members:

Steve Duprey, Jim Bouley, Sal Prizio

Staff Present:

Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager – Development
Tim Thompson, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development
Stephanie McKim, Administrative Coordinator

- 1. Meeting called to order:** 5:01 pm.
- 2. Welcome by Chair Vlacich:** Chair Vlacich welcomed those in attendance. Members of the Committee and City staff were introduced.
- 3. Adoption of Minutes:** A motion was made by Councilor Kurtz and duly seconded by Mr. Segal to adopt the minutes of December 03, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.
- 4. Comments by Mayor Champlin:** Mayor Champlin noted the Mayor's Business Visitation Program has upcoming visits with Sue McCoo of Hilltop Consignment, Viking Shop, and Capital Craftsman.
- 5. Discuss Draft Committee Work Plan:** Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager – Development provided a draft outline of a work plan for the committee to consider.

Mr. Walsh reviewed proposed committee work plan topics and discussed ways the Economic Development Advisory Committee could potentially contribute to the City's community development initiatives, as well as provide recommendations to City Council on economic development related items that come up from time to time. Mr. Thompson and Mayor

1 Champlin noted that as a standing committee, the City Council can make referrals to the
2 committee for guidance and recommendations.

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4 Potential work plan topics which were discussed included:

- 5 1) Economic Development Master Plan Update: It was noted that funding to update the
6 City's 2023 Master Plan (which was adopted in 2008) is tentatively programmed for
7 City Fiscal Year 2026 (which begins on July 1, 2025). Per NH State Law RSA 674, the
8 Planning Board is responsible for updating the Master Plan. However, Mr. Walsh noted
9 that the updated plan will include an Economic Development Chapter. Subject to further
10 discussions with the Planning Board, it was noted that EDAC would likely have a
11 significant role in supporting that portion of the Master Plan update.
- 12 2) Interim Zoning Amendments: Mr. Walsh noted that the City's Council's 2024-2025
13 Priorities also included interim zoning amendments to address problematic areas of the
14 zoning ordinance. Once the new Master Plan is completed, a larger, more
15 comprehensive zoning ordinance update will be initiated to implement the vision and
16 policy set forth in the new Master Plan. Like the Master Plan, zoning amendments are
17 the purview of the Planning Board; however, it would be appropriate for EDAC to
18 review those amendments which may be relevant to economic development. Suggested
19 areas of focus for the interim zoning amendments include, but may not limited to:
- 20 • Removing parking requirements from the zoning ordinance and transitioning
21 these to the site plan review regulations;
 - 22 • Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs);
 - 23 • Potential expansion of conditional use permits to delegate decision making
24 authority to Planning Board and negate need to apply to Zoning Board of
25 Adjustment for variances;
 - 26 • Building setbacks in residential zoning districts (particularly those districts
27 regulating older neighborhoods in the community);
 - 28 • Building heights at various locations, including inside the fence line at the
29 Concord Municipal Airport within in the Industrial District (allow exceedances
30 by Conditional Use Permit pending approval of US Federal Aviation
31 Administration and NH Department of Transportation), as well as those
32 portions of the Central Business Performance District located in Penacook
33 Village and along North / South State Street;
 - 34 • Lot Frontage, including calculation of lot frontage for corner lots;
 - 35 • Zoning nonconformities resulting from City infrastructure improvements;
 - 36 • Signage regulations, including language to authorize the preservation and
37 restoration of "ghost signs";
 - 38 • Definitions, including Duplex, Attached, and Multifamily dwellings, as well as
39 others; and,
 - 40 • Other miscellaneous updates to comply with recent changes to State Law and/or
41 relevant case law.
- 42 3) Revisions to Community Development Department Permitting Fees.
43 4) Economic Development Ambassadors.
44 5) Ideas for Potential Future Presentations/Discussions.
45

1 Discussion ensued about the committee’s role in the potential work plan, prioritization of topics
 2 and areas of interest, importance of committee’s recommendation to City Council, and timeline
 3 for work plan execution, with particular emphasis on interim zoning amendments.
 4

5 Michelline Dufort inquired about EDAC’s potential role in the review of outdoor dining in
 6 parking spaces, and whether that should be added to EDAC’s draft work plan. Mayor Champlin
 7 briefly explained the history of outdoor dining in parking spaces and explained that the Mayor’s
 8 Ad-Hoc Committee for Outdoor Dining and the City’s Parking Committee have worked on this
 9 issue over the last few years. He also noted that regulations governing outdoor dining in
 10 parking spaces have been adopted by the City Council, and noted that the three restaurants
 11 currently using parking spaces for dining are renting those spaces from the City. The Mayor also
 12 elaborated on interrelationship between outdoor dining in parking spaces, competing interests
 13 for use of public parking among various downtown stakeholders (residents, merchants,
 14 employees, cultural venues, etc.), and financial implications for the Parking Fund.
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- 16 **6. Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce Local Government Affairs Committee’s**
 17 **Suggested Interim Zoning Amendments:** Mr. Pollack provided a brief overview of the Greater
 18 Concord Chamber of Commerce’s Local Government Affairs Committee and its areas of focus
 19 regarding economic development in Concord. Mr. Pollack voiced support for EDAC’s draft work
 20 plan. He also stated that the list of interim zoning amendments discussed in EDAC’s work plan
 21 are consistent with those identified by the Chamber of Commerce as being problematic and in
 22 need of revision so as to not unduly deter development. Mr. Pollack summarized the history of
 23 zoning ordinances in the United States as well as the City of Concord, and discussed certain
 24 areas of the current zoning ordinance which the Chamber felt could use improvement. Mr.
 25 Pollack provided anecdotal examples of how certain areas of the zoning ordinance resulted in
 26 unintended consequences as well as the need for relief from the Zoning Board of Adjustment via
 27 a variance and the challenge of demonstrating the concept of “hardship” associated therewith
 28 when seeking relief from certain problematic portions of the zoning ordinance.
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30 Discussion ensued regarding challenges with the zoning ordinance, and committee review of
 31 City staff proposed changes referenced in work plan topic ideas. Mr. Walsh will prepare, on the
 32 behalf of City staff, a suggested timeline for workplan topics to the committee.
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- 34 **7. Committee’s Meeting Schedule; Potential Transition to Bi-Monthly Meetings:** The
 35 Committee discussed its meeting schedule. It is the consensus of the committee to meet
 36 monthly with the next meeting to be February 25, 2025 at 5:00pm.
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38 **8. Other Business:**
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40 Mr. Hakuzimana updated the committee on the current status of the local immigrant and
 41 refugee community. He requests continued support from the committee members as this
 42 population navigates unknown challenges. These challenges may have an impact on workforce
 43 and local businesses.
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45 A brief discussion ensued regarding the community impact, outreach, and concerns regarding
 46 recent federal government actions concerning federal aid and grants to states, communities,
 47 and other organizations.

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A motion was made by Mr. Pollack and duly seconded by Counselor Kurtz to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie McKim

Administrative Coordinator - Development