

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 4, 2010**

1. Roll Call

Bryers - present	Durocher - present	Fish - present	Kermes - absent
Mazzier - present	Moffitt - present	Viele - present	White - present

2. Minutes of February 4, 2010

Durocher moved, Viele seconded; motion carried: "To approve the minutes of February 4, 2010 as presented."

White moved, Mazzier seconded; motion carried: "To revise the agenda to add the item of reviewing conceptual plans for the Larchwood Inn property in lieu of Item 3."

VOTE: Bryers – aye Durocher – aye Mazzier – aye
 Moffitt – aye Viele – aye White – aye

3. Review of Larchwood Inn Property Conceptual Plan

The Principal Planner provided a copy of the pre-application submission plan for Larchwood Inn, dated January 15, 2010, as developed by Donald Powers Architects, Inc. The packets for the meeting had also contained the Planning Board staff comments dated 02-09-10.

The plan proposes an eighty unit Multi-Household Land Development Project on the site of the present Larchwood Inn. The 80 residential units, two to three bedrooms, are proposed within ten multi-household structures. Twenty residential units would be set aside as affordable units, representing 25% of the total. A total of 116 parking spaces are proposed.

Discussion ensued regarding specifics of the design as proposed. Mr. Mazzier expressed concern that the proposal includes three story structures. Members were in agreement that the proposal is exceedingly ambitious in that eighty units are proposed for the 3.4 acre parcel.

Mr. White expressed reservations about the proposed parking availability. He indicated that while he is concerned that the proposal will result in the loss of a commercial parcel it should be acknowledged that the property is presently vacant and has been so for quite some time. He suggested the proposed additional residential units in close proximity to the downtown area might result in increased patrons for those businesses.

Members discussed the issue of the subject parcel changing from a commercial use to residential use. Ms. Durocher expressed concern that the Town would be losing a

commercial property. Mr. Viele suggested consideration be given to a mixed use whereby structure could have commercial businesses on the lower floor and residences on the upper floors.

Mr. Bryers noted that the parcel and existing building are an important feature within an area that serves as the western gateway to the historic Downtown Wakefield area.

Members indicated support for the proposal element that would set aside 25% of the residential units for affordable housing.

Members were unanimous that the Economic Development Committee does not object to development of residential use for the Larchwood Inn property. The Committee recognizes that it does not appear that the subject parcel is necessarily viable as a commercial property given that there has been no significant interest in commercial development of the parcel since the Larchwood Inn closed its business there. The Committee would like to see another property in Town zoned for commercial use to replace the Larchwood Inn parcel.

4. Other Items of Concern and Interest

Mr. Fish stated that he would like the agenda for the upcoming Planning Board and EDC workshop to include: review of EDC recommended revisions to the Use Code tables; discussion of re-zoning issues; the Comprehensive Community Plan Update; and, the Larchwood Inn proposal.

Mr. Fish noted that the citizen survey undertaken for the 2005 Comp Plan Update reflected the need to expand commercial in an effort to further diversify the tax base and reduce existing over dependence upon residential property taxes.

Mr. Fish indicated he has been contacted by the Chamber of Commerce relative to an upcoming Economic Development Forum. The Forum theme will be how to facilitate economic development opportunities. He also noted that there is a Job Fair scheduled for April 28, 2010 at the Wakefield Mall. Another Job Fair is tentatively scheduled for September.

Mr. White provided members with a status report of the proposed trolley service. He stated there will be seven round trips per day over a fourteen hour period. This proposed schedule is for a sixteen week period. He indicated the cost estimate to operate the trolley service is in the neighborhood of \$50,000. He stated that the total advertising revenues have been estimated. It is anticipated that the group involved will apply for an EDC grant.

Discussion ensued regarding potential revenue sources for the trolley service. At this time the plans are to make stops at eight commercial nodes along the route. It is estimated that there are at least ten businesses per node. Each business will be asked to contribute \$75 per season.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m. by unanimous vote.