

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## ~ 2011 REPORT ~

The 15-member Economic Development Advisory Council, established in 2009, represents a broad-based group of Milford citizens and business owners working to strengthen and retain the existing business and commercial base in Town and encourage opportunities for new economic growth. The Council was given the charge by the Selectmen to:

*“...develop and recommend economic development policy in accordance with the goals of the Milford Board of Selectmen and Milford Master Plan, and utilizing the report Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford dated June 8, 2009, facilitate the economic development goals, recommendations, and actions at the direction of the Board of Selectmen.”*



The Council met regularly in 2011 and continued its efforts on these major areas identified in the Advisory Committee's ***Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford, Report to the Milford Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, June 8, 2009:***

- ***Land Use Subcommittee:*** The Land Use Subcommittee, at the request and guidance of the Planning Board, provided recommendations to the Board that brought about a positive Town vote to refine and broaden the business, commercial, and industrial uses allowed in appropriate zoning districts. The Subcommittee spent much of 2010 analyzing these uses with the intent of broadening opportunities for new and expansion of existing businesses in the appropriate zones. With the successful passage of these zoning amendments, the Land Use Subcommittee assisted the Planning Board in the development of the West Elm Street Corridor design guidelines, again with an eye on enabling developers and property owners with a tool that communicates the Town's desires for appearance and access management,

up front and early in the planning process, intended to bring about streamlined approvals saving time and money.

- *Policies and Procedures Subcommittee:* The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee worked closely with the Community Development Director and Town Administrator to identify processes and procedures in place that either hindered or promoted a business-friendly environment. Subcommittee work continues to work with applicable Town departments to streamline permitting and enhance communication and resources.
- *Website and Marketing Subcommittee:* The Website and Marketing Subcommittee continued to partner with the Town's Community Media Department to enhance communication through the website and the Town's community access cable television channel.
- *Hotel Feasibility Study:* A task force consisting of several EDAC members, a local business owner, and the Community Development Director spearheaded the commissioning of a hotel feasibility study to address the longstanding vision of a hotel facility in Milford. After speaking and meeting with several experts in the hospitality industry, a preliminary feasibility report was prepared by a Boston consulting firm, The Pinnacle Advisory Group, which found through its analysis that the Town is shy of 'corporate room nights' to make investors cautious. However, there is a demand, and further corporate growth could accelerate the opportunity. The Community Development Office continues to distribute the report to commercial real estate interests and hotel site interests. Of particular note in the commissioning of this report was the support from local businesses to provide matching funds for the cost, as landing a hotel remains a high priority.

At year's end EDAC began its review of the 2009 Recommendations to look at its next efforts and initiatives. EDAC is in full support of the development options for the West Milford Tax Increment Financing District and the sale of the former police station site on West Elm Street. The Council looks forward to 2012 and continuing its broad-based efforts to grow the local economy and promote Milford as the hub of Souhegan Valley commerce and industry. A prosperous community is the goal - maintaining Milford's high quality of life while building a strong local economy shared by all its citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Ciardelli, Chairman

Economic Development Advisory Council

