

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL 2015 Annual 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 Board of 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."

EDAC develops its annual goals and projects from economic development objectives identified in the 2009 Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford, Report to the Milford Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. This past year the Economic Development Advisory Council supported those various warrant articles that support Town economic development goals as we do each year. The specific articles EDAC vocalized support for were the Library expansion, the West Elm Street water line, the Pumpkin Festival and the Jennison Road Bridge.

Early in 2015 some EDAC members began to work closely with Andre Garron from the UNH Cooperative Extension and the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce on a Business Retention and Expansion project. The project involved forming a committee to establish and conduct a business outreach survey focused on Milford and Amherst area businesses. The focus of the project was to identify areas that these businesses feel that our community does well, or things that need improvement to help the sustainability and expansion of our local businesses. The project was received well by our community and the results were presented in September at an Economic Summit that the Chamber hosted.

One of the areas identified as a priority was to address the skills gap between employees and employers through connecting the community college system, school district and local businesses. This initiative was one that EDAC decided it would like to concentrate on. EDAC members Don Jalbert and Matt Ciardelli presented the findings of the Business Retention and Expansion project to the Selectmen in November with Andre Garron and gained support from the Selectmen to move forward and work on this initiative. Two groups were formed; Business Outreach and Education Outreach, and the groups had their initial meetings in late 2015.

As EDAC moves forward in 2016 we are focused on continuing to follow our charge and facilitate economic development in our community. We plan to work on both sides of the skills gap initiative and in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, help to organize and/or add value to a job fair that we can host this year. If at any time additional information is needed, please contact Lincoln Daley, Community Development Director at 249-0620 or <http://www.milford.nh.gov/town/boards-committees-and-commissions/community-development/economic-development-advisory-council> or any EDAC member.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Ciardelli
Chairman, Economic Development Advisory Council