

April 9, 2024

Meeting Notes

Loudon Economic Development Committee Meeting

Attendees: EDC Members: Stephen Caine, Ned Lizotte, Jeff Miller

Central NH Regional Planning Commission: Vincent Pagano

Guest: Michael Polizzotti Field Specialist, Community and Economic Development UNH Cooperative Extension - Merrimack County

The April 9 meeting of the Loudon Economic Development Committee was called to order at 5:40 pm.

Michael Polizzotti from UNH Cooperative extension joined the Loudon EDC to speak about economic development in the town, and how his role as the field specialist for Merrimack County could be leveraged to assist Loudon in its economic development efforts. The Community and Economic Development division of UNH Cooperative Extension helps town leverage resources to develop an economic base, assist in beautification plans, leadership and a large variety of technical assistance and training programs, as well as visioning sessions, education, and community assessments. Mike gave an overview of projects he is currently working on, including a Downtowns and Trails project for Hopkinton, and a NH Digital Equity project for the region. Mike has been with UNH Cooperative extension for two years.

Mike was asked to describe projects he has worked on in towns similar to Loudon. Mike highlighted the Trails & Downtowns program engaging businesses, doing community assessments of local economic drivers, mobilization of community members to spatially assess town assets, and analyses of trail system. The LEDC expressed interest in seeing the report for Hopkinton that was finished at the end of 2023.

Stephen mentioned that Loudon has a Trails Committee and a robust trails system. Stephen asked about how these trails could be leveraged to bolster economic development in town. Mike mentioned an app developed by UNH and UVM called Trailfinder. Trailfinder is an app that allows local trail management entities to manage trails displayed on the app. The app also has a function called "Trailside Services" where local businesses are displayed on a map for trail related services such as bike shops, restaurants, and other businesses that can provide services to trail users. Typically, a town entity such as an EDC will use existing relationships to introduce the app to local businesses. The EDC mentioned this should be used for Loudon, and in time advertised in the Loudon Ledger.

It was suggested that Mike and Vincent connect to the Loudon Trails Subcommittee to introduce the web app.

Ned Lizotte mentioned events such as a "trail-a-thon" to increase traffic and awareness of Loudon's trail system. Stephen asked about the State's view on trails, Mike said he could not speak for the state but UNH Cooperative Extension's view is that when trails are done right they can be an economic driver for towns.

The next Loudon EDC is May 2 at 5:30pm.

Stephen Caine motioned to adjourn, Jeff Miller seconded and the Loudon EDC adjourned unanimously at 6:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vincent Pagano