



Planning Department

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Town of Wendell Strategic Economic Development Action

On September 27, 2012, the Town of Wendell Board of Commissioners held an economic development work session with Wake County Economic Development Director Ken Atkins to discuss potential initiatives and begin to outline steps toward building economic development opportunities for the Town of Wendell. The Board of Commissioners at their November 12, 2012 indicated that economic development is a top priority of the town and wanted to hold a separate meeting on December 11, 2012 to exclusively discuss the draft action plan in more detail.

The following will serve as a brief roadmap that summarizes strategies and tactics that will be utilized by the Town of Wendell in 2012-2013 to jumpstart economic development initiatives. These economic development strategies will be coordinated in conjunction with other planning, marketing, branding, and community engagement initiatives as developed. Some of these current efforts include the following:

1. U 5323 - Intersection Design Update
2. Website Update with Liaison Design Group
3. Rural Business Enterprise Grant Project along Main and Third Streets
4. Wendell Wonderland Light Show and Candy Store
5. Water/Sewer Allocation Policy Update
6. Addition of Community Service Leave added to Personnel Policy
7. 2012 Street Resurfacing Project
8. Sewer Rehabilitation Project
9. Wayfinding Signage Program – ongoing - guiding documents being prepared
10. Police Department Facility
11. Town Hall Rehabilitation
12. Façade Grant
13. Economic Incentive Policy
14. Community Center – floor and HVAC improvements
15. Parks and Recreation Master Plan
16. Review of Minimum Housing Policy

The Town of Wendell is excited to engage the community in the following economic development strategic planning process outline to prepare the town for anticipated growth and continued success well into the future.

GOALS:

The Town of Wendell seeks to connect existing ongoing initiatives and projects to broader economic development goals for the town; attract new and retain existing businesses within the town; and identify challenges to economic growth and create targeted strategies for stronger success.

I. Economic Development Committee

a. Goals:

The goal of the Economic Development Committee is to oversee activities of the Town of Wendell economic development program and strategic plan; provide guidance to staff on economic development initiatives; and work to support efforts related to ongoing project initiatives for the town. Town Economic Development Host Committees are to be established that include members of the Board of Commissioners and in some cases members of the Economic Development Committee:

b. Workgroups & Action Plan Strategies:

The Economic Development Committee will encompass four workgroups that will work individually to support collective objectives as outlined in this Strategic Action Plan. The workgroups include the following: 1) Corporate / Development Work; 2) Town Branding; 3) Downtown; and 4) Shovel Ready Sites.

I. CORPORATE / DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP

This Town Board advisory committee will include at least two representatives of the Board who will interface with work efforts related to major existing and potential development in areas outside of the downtown. This group is anticipated to have bi-weekly meetings. This committee shall issue periodic status update reports to the Board of Commissioners regarding its progress.

Strategies:

A. *Economics of Education*

- 1) Develop customized information and talking points on the following education and economic characteristics:
 - i. Educational characteristics of town residents.
 - ii. Wendell relationship to educational institutions in the region.
 - iii. Educational institutions in or near Wendell.
 - iv. Relationship between education and real estate values and attraction
- 2) Strengthen ties and better engage educational facilities in better connecting schools with existing and proposed population base.
- 3) Create connections between education facilities in the town and educational programs that would be attractive to Smart Grid companies.
- 4) Create ongoing partnerships to build educational activities to fill storefronts and attract pedestrian foot traffic to downtown.

- 5) Build business retention strategies through education.

B. Implement Strong Marketing Partnerships with Wake County Economic Development Department

- 1) Identify regular marketing opportunities with the Wake County Economic Development office.
- 2) Identify process and timetable that would be needed to help market shovel-ready sites in Wendell for Smart Grid companies or other developer prospects.
- 3) Identify and assemble information of interest on Wendell to prospective developers that are easily accessible for marketing promotional materials, webpage development, meetings, etc. by the Wake County Economic Development office and others.

C. Wendell Falls Development

- 1) Follow-up and monitor progress to initiate the Wendell Falls development project. Discuss with Redus future opportunities for cross promotion and marketing opportunities with the Town and/or major employers (i.e. Siemens, etc.).
- 2) Conduct discussions with Redus on how to partner development impacts with economic development opportunities in the downtown and/or with housing employees of major existing or future potential employers within the town.
- 3) Identify the current status of a potential hospital at Wendell Falls in the future.
- 4) Identify shovel-ready sites near Wendell Falls for possible development of a hospital or medical facilities or offices.

Members

Milestones for First Quarter 2013:

- a. Schedule meeting with Wake County Economic Development department to discuss upcoming events, meetings, conferences, expos, or business development opportunities in 2013 to link and partner up information on shovel ready sites.
- b. Produce informative talking points and fact sheets that can be linked to Wake County Economic Development webpage.
- c. Provide update demographic information on Wendell for Wake County Economic Development department webpage.
- d. Develop information and talking points on educational programs, services offered by Wendell educational institutions, and educational attainment for the Wendell population (and surrounding regional access).
- e. Create a regular meeting schedule to conduct ongoing roundtable discussions with each principal for Wendell schools, East Wake High School and East Wake Education. Identify partnership opportunities to reinvigorate downtown and connect with business attraction strategies for the Town.
- f. Provide status update on Wendell Falls development.
- g. Identify at least one potential shovel ready site location near Wendell Falls.

II. TOWN BRANDING WORKGROUP

This workgroup will include at least one representative of the Board, Economic Development Committee members and others who will interface with work efforts related to enhancing economic development efforts related to the redesign of the town webpage, wayfinding signage program, appearance efforts, and cell tower utility access in and near the downtown. This group is anticipated to have bi-weekly meetings. This committee shall issue periodic status update reports to the Board of Commissioners regarding its progress.

Strategies:

A. Branding Smart Grid – Friendly

- 1) Create one or two potential shovel-ready sites to be marketed to Smart Grid companies in the future with the assistance of Wake County Economic Development.
- 2) Host a Town of Wendell Open House/Tour to prospective Smart Grid technology companies once shovel ready sites information is available and assembled. This will serve as an opportunity to engage potential companies to locate in the Town of Wendell.
- 3) Create a presence on the Town of Wendell webpage that would be tailored to meeting information and corporate/office relocation needs of Smart Grid technology companies researching communities and development opportunities in the United States. This Smart Grid friendly Town of Wendell webpage could be developed as a free-standing website that is supported through efforts with Wake County Economic Development, the Wendell Chamber of Commerce, and existing businesses, Wells Fargo or other resource entities.
- 4) Build relationships with Smart Grid companies and encourage relocation to Wendell.

B. Creation of New Town of Wendell Webpage:

- 1) Select a webpage designer to create a new Town of Wendell webpage. This should be a priority project for the Town with development and completion conducted in the very near future.
- 2) Develop a new Town webpage that entails specific focus content information related to economic development, Wendell quality of life attributes, and information of interest to prospective developers (i.e. demographics, maps, development processes, contacts, etc.)
- 3) Conduct a major review of the Town webpage every 18-24 months to stay abreast of current trends and informational needs with various projects and town needs.

Members

Milestones for First Quarter 2013:

- a. Research municipalities that contain smart grid companies in North Carolina and around the United States to identify characteristics of attraction.
- b. Work with IT department to develop a customized Town of Wendell economic development page that contains information to attract Smart-Grid friendly companies.
- c. Attend Smart-Grid educational forums and conference to gain contacts and information on positioning Wendell.
- d. Select webpage designer for redesigned Town of Wendell webpage.
- e. Create an updated demographic and economic profile for the Town of Wendell (compile list of characteristics and information that make Wendell quality of life and economic attribute factors).
- f. Work with IT on drafting elements to feature on an Economic Development page.
- g. Research Economic Development webpage for various municipalities to identify preferred information to feature.
- h. Create a photo database inventory of businesses within the town of Wendell.
- i. Create profile information on new large businesses that have recently opened in the last five years in Wendell to feature on future economic development subpage for the town.

III. DOWNTOWN WORKGROUP

This workgroup will include at least one representative of the Board and members of the Economic Development Committee who will interface with work efforts related to downtown attraction and retention efforts. This group is anticipated to have bi-weekly meetings. This committee shall issue periodic status update reports to the Board of Commissioners regarding its progress.

Strategies:

A. Community engagement to attract and retain existing businesses

- 1) Town Manager Office and Planning & Zoning Department will engage in roundtable discussions with the Wendell Chamber of Commerce, major employers, and local businesses to keep them abreast and engaged in future economic development initiatives and explore strategies to help promote economic development attraction and retention efforts.
- 2) Town Manager Office and Planning & Zoning Department will hold continuing discussions with Siemens and Wells Fargo Bank representatives to keep them engaged with future economic development opportunities that may exist for them to partner, promote or expand economic development efforts.

B. Create Tailored Economic Development Incentive Packages

- 1) Conduct a roundtable discussion with existing and prospective businesses to identify their needs related to location and expansion in the Town of Wendell. Identify strengths and weaknesses that would be infused into short and long term economic development outreach. Identify potential barriers and possible strategies to increase retention, expansion and attraction for businesses.

- 2) Explore establishment of an Enterprise Zone / Overlay District in strategic areas of Wendell to foster economic development initiatives and entice development:
 - i. Research rebate implementation options for major developers.
 - ii. Research rebate implementation options for businesses.
 - iii. Explore successful enterprise zone/overlay districts near interchanges for expansion to downtown Wendell.

C. *Housing Stock Diversification*

- 1) Develop a water/sewer allocation policy for the Town of Wendell that helps guide future development.
- 2) Encourage development of policies that encourages housing stock diversity and product types in the market to encourage economic investment.
- 3) Align business development incentives with zoning to encourage a mix of housing stock diversity.
- 4) Research and begin to develop a water/sewer allocation policy for the town.
- 5) Meet with local industries to determine housing needs and types for prospective employees.

Members

Milestones for First Quarter 2013:

- a. Establish an overarching Economic Development Committee that will consist of each workgroup noted above for the Town of Wendell including staff liaisons to the committee.
- b. Form workgroups that include members, contain a defined mission, and identify regular meeting schedules for each workgroup. Each workgroup is to create a defined meeting schedule, list of 2 deliverables to accomplish within the first quarter for reporting purposes to the Economic Development Committee.
- c. Develop a comprehensive Small Business Resource Center that offers consolidated, user-friendly information to prospective businesses.
- d. Connect economic development initiatives to ongoing development work on the Wendell Park Master Plan.
- e. Reach out to various groups internally and externally from Wendell.
- f. Revisit Business Incentive Policy for Town of Wendell to review to date applicability and areas of improvement or customization needed.
- g. Research Enterprise Zones / Overlay District components to identify challenges and opportunities for potential implementation within town.
- h. Identify potential neighborhoods or specific sites in or near the downtown to create incentivized zones to encourage diversity in housing stock to attract downtown living or mix of uses in the downtown.
- i. Begin to develop non-financial incentives guidelines to improve the feasibility of diverse housing stock near the downtown.

IV. SHOVEL READY SITES WORKGROUP

This workgroup will include at least one representative of the Board of Commissioners who will interface with work efforts related to developing a listing and/or catalog of shovel ready sites for companies or organizations seeking to relocate to Wendell. This group is anticipated to have bi-weekly meetings. This committee shall issue periodic status update reports to the Board of Commissioners regarding its progress.

Strategies:

- A. A shovel ready site listing will be developed to assist the Town of Wendell in strategic planning efforts related to economic development attraction and retention efforts.
- B. Identify and assemble at least one or two shovel-ready sites as defined below that would be of interest to Smart Grid technology companies or major developers. Explore potential shovel-ready site locations in or near the Wendell Falls development location in the future.
- C. Create an expanded list of up to a dozen potential shovel-ready sites as defined below that would be of interest to multiple types of businesses.

Members

Milestones for First Quarter 2013:

- a. Identify staff liaisons which will work with the Shovel Ready Sites Subcommittee and Wake County Economic Development Department to develop Shovel Ready Sites and conduct regular meetings to assemble data.
- b. Assemble shovel ready site information for one site location within Wendell in partnership with assistance through Wake County Economic Development Department.

Listing should include:

- i. **Ownership Status -**

It is important for prospective buyers to know that sites can be purchased without undue complications. Ownership status documentation must include:

- 1. A description of the current owner.
- 2. Documentation of title to the property.

- ♦ **General Site Information -**

Site selectors need a wide variety of information to determine whether a location is suitable. General site information must include:

- A description of all parcels that make up the site including a boundary survey
- Proximity notations to notable community assets or areas of regional importance.
- A site map and schedule for site plan approvals and permits.
- A zoning description of the site plus current and future planned zoning of adjacent sites. Land use maps must be provided. Business or industrial use designations to particularly be identified.
- Information about whether the site or adjacent sites fall within the boundaries of special Economic Development Zones or Overlay Districts.

- Aerial photos noting site boundaries.
- The current price offering for land or complete information on pricing.
- Current real estate taxes and special assessments on all parcels that make up the site.
- Identification of current and former land use of the site and adjacent sites.
- Identification of wetlands delineation map.
- Archaeological findings.
- Rare/endangered plant and/or animal report.
- 100 year flood plain evaluations.

◆ **Specific Tests and Assessments -**

Site selectors need to know whether the ground on a particular site is suitable for specific structures or uses. Certain tests and site assessments must be completed and documented, including:

- Geotechnical soil tests.
- Phase I Environmental Assessment and Phase II (if required).
- Topographical analysis and maps.

◆ **Utility Services -**

The availability of utilities is an extremely important factor that site selectors consider. The types of services available at the site and the names of the providers must be documented, including:

- ◆ Electric power.
- ◆ Sanitary sewer.
- ◆ Natural gas.
- ◆ Telecommunications.
- ◆ Water and wastewater treatment.
- ◆ Municipal storm sewer.

◆ **Transportation Access -**

The ability to receive raw materials and components and move finished products to market is crucial to manufacturers. Transportation access documentation includes:

- Distances to major state highways and Interstates.
- Access to navigable river, inland.
- Rail or bus access to site.