

## Lubec Economic Development - Overview

written some time ago - beginnings of "bring your job with you"

"First, do no harm"

. Like it or not, currently, tourism and the arts is a major part of our economy. It is also a conduit for marketing our community, attracting new residents, both part and full time, and a gateway for potential businesses. Planners of any new activities should always ensure that negative effects on existing economic activities and businesses are minimized.

. The economic planning committee should work with the planning committee, starting by reviewing ordinance recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. A coherent and planned approach to economic growth will help preserve and improve our existing tourism industry and at the same time increase attractiveness to business. Carefully and thoughtfully created zoning etc. lets businesses know that the town is in agreement on how development should proceed and reduces the possibility of unexpected conflicts with the associated expense to both business and citizens. Planning can also help to centralize shopping etc. and reduce traffic and parking issues.

- "Local Dollars, Local Sense" should be required reading for all involved with economic development, especially the first few chapters, which illustrate the advantages of giving preference and support to local business activities. Recent approval of intrastate crowd funding is also an important development.

"Build to your strengths" ~ Tourism, natural resources, fishing... identify them and determine how they fit together and can support one another - Focus on extending the season and converting tourists to full-time residents. Get rid of the "summer mindset." We have enough peak season festivals etc. Adding more drains resources.

Build out from fall and spring and support efforts to create winter events.

And other sayings...

- "be careful what you wish for"
- "success has spoiled many good ideas"

Both are caveats reminding us to consider carefully unintended consequences and other potential negative side effects of our well-intentioned plans. The second, I think, is my own. I've been involved with many projects which were great while small and manageable but grew beyond desirable limits.

### Requirements:

This is the most difficult, yet most important, phase of any plan ~ defining what we want. Longtime residents, new residents, new summer residents, families, youth, retirees... all have different views of what our community should be and how its resources should be managed.

Most important is to ensure that all views are listened to, respected, and considered. Approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive and often can be complimentary.

Every endeavor requires people and money to make it happen. Identify interdependent activities and avoid duplication of effort.

It's not just about jobs.

- In order to create and maintain employment, the tax base and population must be maintained.

This is of course, a somewhat circular proposition – jobs are needed to maintain

population, featuring life as a permanent resident and realtors among the concessionaires at summer festivals etc. Yes – creating an attractive yet honest marketing tool will require assessing our pluses and minuses – more on that in another section.

- One approach to the circular dilemma is to think outside of traditional, i.e. menial jobs. Such employment is disappearing everywhere except possibly 3rd world countries, and even there, the trend is to replace humans with automation as soon as the former's wages and benefits exceed the cost of automation. One way to preserve some such jobs, especially in resort towns such as Lubec is for personnel to offer a positive human experience. There does exist a backlash against the coldness of interacting with machines, and people may be willing to pay a bit more in return if they encounter cheerful and helpful checkout clerks and others. Traditional retail has suffered from the efficiency and cost effectiveness of online and big box selling, but also from elimination of personal service, knowledgeable and helpful sales people, etc. Local businesses would do well to provide workshops and other training for their staff to ensure the best possible customer experience.

- While the above approach may help to some degree, a more effective strategy might be to attract residents who already have jobs and who can bring them here, e. g. remote workers such as SW developers, web designers, consultants and others whose occupation does not require them to be physically located with their work. Form a committee/ subcommittee to explore all aspects of remote working, connect with Axiom and other resources and find ways to build skill sets from our local population to support individuals and businesses interested in locating here.

- Make winter an asset. Yes – it's cold. Yes – it's snowy. This is not unique to Lubec or Maine. Temperatures in the mid-Atlantic states were often within 15 degrees of Lubec's and they had snow and ice and horrendous traffic. When someone asks what the winters are like, be honest but put it in perspective. More on winter later – my point is again that we have to start by seeing Lubec as the attractive full-time community it can be. Each resident and resident wannabe is our real estate sales and marketing department. People want to live here, and if we encourage and facilitate their dream, they can and will bring with them the basis for increased economic activity.

Assets:

~ - Note that some of these are in both asset and liability lists. We decide which category best describes them and it is up to us to make the liabilities into assets as much as possible.

- \* marks items we want to be especially careful to preserve in our economic planning.

Natural beauty \*

Quiet \*

Cool summers

No traffic \*

Community

friendly, close-knit, and in the long run, supportive even of those with whom we disagree. Even (for the most part), those who are not steeped in the Maine tradition grasp the spirit of it or are attracted here because they already have

it.

## Airport

- . a vastly underused asset. AFAIK, it's the Easternmost turf strip (I'm assuming E-port is the easternmost airport). Great recreational destination but also could be another business – rides, flight training, etc. One caveat of course would be noise if we were successful. One person has expressed interest in moving here and running a Fixed Base Operation (FBO). Several people have expressed interest in a committee to explore airport potential.

## Winter

- examine winter in a positive light (yes – it's possible). Restore traditional winter pastimes, e. g. block off a street for sledding, do other winter sports things when we have sufficient snow.

Build a skating rink. Visit friends, have house parties. Glenn Charles says fat-biking in winter is a growing sport. Quit whining, explore the possibilities, develop the winter community, and tell everybody how much fun it is. Is the airport kept plowed in winter for Angel Flight etc. or could it be used for ski planes. Thinking about flights to Moosehead etc.

## Broadband internet

- As above, explore, develop, market remote work possibilities. Find ways to educate those who are interested in ways to take advantage of remote working. Identify occupations and businesses which lend themselves to remote work.

- Assist and enable local art, musicians, and other creative entrepreneurs in marketing and selling their work more widely. Streaming, Video production, recording and facilities are examples

## Remoteness \*

- Again, an asset that needs to be preserved. While this does not mean Lubec is capable of relocating itself, it does mean that our desire to build our economy can have the unintended consequence of bringing our environment closer to the noise and stress of the world. The internet in particular, though enabling many of us to conduct business and live here, brings with it the interruptions and distractions that interfere with our pleasure in being here and disrupts our creative and contemplative processes. Our remoteness provides an environment for retreats and other physical and mental enhancing activities, and provides a refuge from unwanted influences that an increasingly large portion of the population craves. Good businesses are beginning to recognize the value of such attributes.

## Attitude

- Someone told me “attitudes don't create jobs.” I beg to differ. In the US. Navy, I was introduced to the “can do spirit.” That's an attitude that developed probably from a bunch of guys on a ship on fire and full of holes in the middle of the ocean with no place to go. Lubec is certainly not in such dire straits and many/most project attitudes of hope and determination. Attitudes are contagious, and we pass them on, good or bad. They determine how we approach our goals and obstacles and influence how those with whom we come in contact approach theirs. This cumulative morale determines our success or failure

in our present jobs and our potential for undertaking more. It certainly determines to a great extent our ability to attract others to our community and their willingness to invest in us.

#### School

- Given our loss of our high school, it is more important than ever that we support to our utmost our grade school. We need to keep and attract families and younger people who intend to have families. For that we need to be able to list in our brochures and advertise to potential residents how good our K-9 is (and of course make it the best).

#### Community Outreach

- ~ This and other organizations and their contributions need to be inventoried and their contributions advertised at every opportunity.

#### Lubec Citizens Association

- . an incubator for citizen involvement and support
- "farm team" for committees and future Selectmen etc.
- encourage and organize workshops, presentation, and other educational programs
- . public speaking, parliamentary procedure, facilitating, video conferencing, community organization etc.
- maintain neutrality and inclusiveness. Individuals can form their own committees etc. outside of LCA as they see fit, or volunteer for Town committees Select Board/town gov.
- Committee mission statements, rules etc. are being documented and will be posted on the web site etc.
- Documentation, procedures and other Town activities are being reviewed, clarified, organized etc. and plans for improving communication are underway.
- The Town web site has been considerably improved and more is being planned, such as regular posting of committee activities and an opt-in mailing list, are being considered.
- Revive and continue regular meeting between Select board and local businesses.

#### Regional Medical Center

- . Valuable asset — support it
- . team with other health oriented businesses etc. to address health issues (see liabilities)

#### Skills

- Create a skills inventory etc. online database. This could be a community project for students or anyone else who has SW, database, personnel, and other knowledge or wants to learn. Skills can include not only job experience and training, but aptitudes, interests etc. People often undersell themselves and do not know how to present and promote their abilities. Research what already exists in employment help but create something uniquely suited for Lubec. A recurring theme in discussing Maine's employment and business investment is lack of needed skills.

- Include retirees and other willing to teach or otherwise contribute to the community

#### ' Volunteers

- Create committees (committees do not have to be town-sponsored) to identify projects and pursue grants to fund them. These could be public works projects etc. which could employ local people and train them for future work. Again, identify

existing programs (CCLC, Sunrise Economic Council etc.) before duplicating their efforts.

. Volunteerism is an excellent way to develop job skills and network with potential employers.

The Town has vast numbers of things which need to be done.

Liabilities:

~ liabilities are opportunities for businesses and individuals to address Community

- attitude often negative

- Divided, hostile to new ideas, hostile to new people, paranoid, defeatist, tired, arrogant,

disrespectful and not understanding of history, traditions, over educated, under educated, unrealistic, and pessimistic.

Winter

- Yeah – it's cold and it snows. See assets.

Remoteness

- So we don't get to build and fill big arenas. If we wanted to live in non-remote places we wouldn't be here.

Lack of transportation

- This is real, and an opportunity

- investigate ride sharing database, taxi service

- survey activities, evaluate need

- trips to Machias, Calais, etc.

- reasons

. how many people per vehicle

' winter driving, deterrent to activity, event participation

Insufficient tax base to build/maintain infrastructure

- Real – see assets for solutions, i.e. build population and participation to avoid raising taxes

lack of jobs

health issues

skills/business mismatch

lack of high school