

**From:** [Larry Kenah](#)  
**To:** [Lisa Tomy](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Thoughts on Job Description for Land Use and Economic Development Director  
**Date:** Friday, May 15, 2015 2:01:50 PM

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Here is the note that I sent to Franny and Chingsung. I am fine with this note being passed to the entire BoS and publicly posted.

Thanks one more time for your help

Larry Kenah

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Larry Kenah <[larry.kenah@gmail.com](mailto:larry.kenah@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** May 15, 2015 at 9:23:39 AM EDT  
**To:** Franny Osman <[frannyola@gmail.com](mailto:frannyola@gmail.com)>, Chingsung Chang <[khan32k5@gmail.com](mailto:khan32k5@gmail.com)>  
**Subject: Thoughts on Job Description for Land Use and Economic Development Director**

I would like to make a couple of comments on the job description for Land Use and Economic Development Director. You are the two members of the Board of Selectmen with ties to the Economic Development Committee so I will share these thoughts with you.

Let me first say that these comments are my own and do not reflect the opinions of any other member of the EDC or of the EDC as a whole. We have not had an opportunity to meet as a committee between the time when the job description was published and the deadline for comments.

## Summary

If I could summarize my reaction to this job description into a single idea, it is that the job description contains very little emphasis on economic development. Further, the role described in the job description seems more like an internally focused role that alters internal reporting structures but provides little focus on development. Such a role will require time and attention from the newly hired director that will detract from time and attention that could be spent on improved economic development. The rest of this note will include some specific aspects of the job description.

## Requirements

The requirements emphasize planning rather than development. There is some overlap but economic development is in many ways markedly different from town planning.

## **Education**

An advanced degree in urban planning is the only educational requirement listed. I would like to see different degree requirements that emphasize economics or business.

## **Certifications**

The only certification listed is "town planner by the AICP". Why is any certification needed? This seems more like a requirement that will winnow the field of otherwise fully qualified applicants. I recommend that this requirement be removed.

## **Experience**

The job description spends little time on previous job experience. Let me suggest two types of experience that should be added.

- • Previous economic development experience at the city or town level
- • Business experience in the private sector, preferably in the small business or retail area

Perhaps this second bullet is a bit of a stretch but I think that experience outside of city or town government will inject fresh thinking into the town's approach to economic development.

## **Internal vs External**

When I first heard that we were looking for an economic development director, I was thinking about an activist externally focused role. The job description instead describes a newly created box in the town's organizational hierarchy. While such a position might be needed to reduce the town manager's workload, it is not clear how a person successful in this middle manager role will have the time or energy to devote to economic development.

## **Words, etc**

This job description almost reads like a job description for Land Use Director where economic development is added as an afterthought. The words "economic development" appear in three contexts in the job description.

- • There are eight occurrences in the job title, Land Use and Economic Development Director.

- • There are five occurrences where the words “and economic development” follow the words “land use”.
- • There eight other occurrences but three of these do not count.

The pages called Job Duties and Summary Job Description are essentially identical. The only difference between these two bulleted lists is that the words “and economic development” are added to two of the bullet items at the end of the list. In any case, three identical bullets reduce the count from eight to five.

The only real emphasis on economic development in the job description is in the role of ombudsman. As we on the EDC have learned in the past few months, the ombudsman role is more tailored toward existing businesses. While this role is important, it is only partly related to attracting new businesses and improving economic development in the town.

## **Benefits**

The final section of the job description lists several towns that have appointed a person into a joint role. Have these towns been successful with the joint role or has one half of the role, land use or economic development, been shortchanged because of focus on the other half?

Thanks for taking the time to read these thoughts.

larry