



## **Economic Development Committee Task Force Report**

To the Town Board  
and  
Residents of the Town of Red Hook  
Dutchess County, New York

Wednesday, June 24, 2009  
7:30pm

Red Hook Town Hall  
7340 South Broadway, Red Hook, New York 12571

## **Town of Red Hook Economic Development Committee Task Force 2009**

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The Economic Development Committee (EDC) Task Force was created to define the purpose, responsibilities and organization of the Economic Development Committee for the Town of Red Hook, NY.

The EDC Task Force was formed in March 2009 and met bi-weekly through June 17, 2009. Members of the Task Force included Michelle R. Martin, Chairperson, James Brudvig, Mary Ann Johnson, Beth Jones and Ed Pruitt.

The EDC Task Force members were charged with creating a new vision for an approach to economic development in Red Hook. We conducted research into the current state of economic development within Red Hook and effective programs throughout the northeast region. In an effort to include other important perspectives, the EDC Task Force created and distributed an in-depth survey to each of the Town of Red Hook Advisory Committees and Boards as well as the Highway Department. Thirteen surveys were distributed and four were completed and returned; their input is included in this report.

### **Executive Summary**

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The Economic Development Committee should be the agency for managing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the local economy. The EDC must be broadly representative of our diverse community including educational and non-profit, commercial, small business and retail sectors.

The EDC will be the central entity to manage the flow of information and communication pertaining to economic development in the Red Hook area. It is vital that the EDC establish and maintain partnerships with various advisory committees within the Town of Red Hook, and the Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli. These committees and the EDC will work together in an effort to create and foster an environment whereby all committees are inspired to fulfill the vision of the community.

The EDC will be accountable and responsible for keeping all activities progressing. The EDC will reach out to the largest employers in Red Hook, in particular the private and public school sectors, to identify key needs and opportunities presented by these significant populations.

Good communication will greatly facilitate the movement from policy and strategy to economic activity.

## Purpose of EDC

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### *Mission Statement*

The mission of the Economic Development Committee is to support the economic health of the community and to promote development of business and supporting services which will provide job opportunities, diversify and broaden the tax base, and enhance the quality of life in the Town of Red Hook including the Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli.

### **Policies**

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1. Make recommendations and support projects aimed at improving and enhancing the community's public infrastructure, its visual appeal and urban design, and its overall competitiveness to create opportunities and sites for future economic development proposals.
2. Review and recommend specific incentive proposals for projects of an economic development nature.
3. Engage in strategic economic development planning and policy development.

### **Responsibilities**

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- Sponsor Community Wide Visioning. Visioning is a process through which concerned citizens, business and government leaders work together to create a shared image of the future of the community. The EDC will spearhead this process and provide the structure for implementation of the vision for Red Hook.
- Facilitate and organize all resources for Economic Development. The EDC needs to manage the integration of tasks and communication that occurs between all advisory committees as it relates to economic development, and will be responsible for assuring all the activities are progressing. These committees and the EDC must work cohesively to fulfill the vision for the community.
- Implement The Centers and Green Space Plan. This plan proposes the need for multiple districts and sub-districts and will be the guiding principal of the EDC to work with advisory committees to determine the types of businesses that would best fit within that plan to support the needs of the community. Each district and business will be viewed for its ability to support the local tax base and fulfill the Community Vision.

## Initial Focus of the EDC

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1. Establish a business incubator program with resources such as an office suites location, commercial kitchen space, etc. where new businesses could use shared resources and facilities to support their growth to succeed. The program would foster the start-up, evolution, growth and ultimate sustainability of new and early stage businesses. It could also offer helpful tools or services to existing local entrepreneurs. The specific goal and clear strategy of the incubator will be determined by the EDC or partner organization.
2. Reach out to the largest employers in Red Hook, in particular the private and public school sectors, to identify key needs and opportunities presented by these significant communities.
3. Work closely with Town Advisory Committees to address taxes as it relates to the business community, and assess the advantages and opportunities of each potential new business and how it will affect our tax base.
4. Be the resource to potential business owners and/or developers to direct them in the process to effectively establish business in the Red Hook community.
5. Collaborate with the Red Hook Area Chamber of Commerce, and consistently network and partner with local EDC organizations such as Northern Dutchess Alliance and Dutchess County Economic Development.
6. Direct businesses to regional and national agencies which provide grants and loans. Research the possibility of establishing a system of micro-finance that would enable local residents to invest in local small business.
7. Offer business planning for the formation, growth and success of businesses, and hold seminars in conjunction with the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce and SCORE.
8. Provide direction for location of businesses to implement the Community Vision and the Centers and Green Space Plan. Real estate sales or lease information should be readily available for potential business owners.
9. Market Red Hook to potential business owners and developers to fulfill the needs of the community as determined by the Centers and Green Space Plan and the Community Vision. Information could be disseminated through an EDC website, brochures and various publications to interested parties.
10. Be a resource for business by directing prospects to the various not-for-profit agencies that will assist in funding and incentive programs for economic development.

## Committee Organization

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Members of the EDC should present a vision and commitment to facilitate economic development in the Town of Red Hook. Of highest importance is their experience and skill necessary to fulfill the EDC vision. It is the recommendation of this Task Force that the members of the Economic Development Committee be selected without bias and partisanship, but rather by their business acumen.

## Committee Structure

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The Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee will be appointed by the town board. This person should be a strong leader with excellent communication and organizational skills, and a passion for coordinating economic development in Red Hook.

The Economic Development Committee will consist of nine members: at least five must be residents of the Town of Red Hook; four may work in Red Hook. The Task Force recommends that one member be a government liaison, keeping track of governmental changes on state, regional and county level and monitor how those changes may affect economic development in Red Hook. We further recommend committee representatives to each of the municipalities in the Town of Red Hook. Ideally, members of the EDC would bring a strong expertise in the areas needed to fulfill the vision. Terms will be determined by the Town Board, however the Task Force recommends staggered five year terms.

To fill the seats on the committee, the Task Force recommends the Chairperson of the EDC request letters of interest from various sectors of the community, and determine who best to represent that sector.

The Chairperson would conduct a vetting process and nominate that individual for appointment by the town board. This process will allow for a diversified and well represented body of committed citizens with the proper skills. Individuals with particular expertise who are not available to serve on the committee, may be asked by the EDC chairperson to act as an advisor to the committee when specific projects arise.

The recommended sectors to be included, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Agriculture
- Cultural/Entertainment
- Education — Public and Private
- Finance
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Professionals
- Religious Organizations
- Restaurants/Food Services
- Retail Establishments

In addition, it is recommended that a representative from Town Committees with a primary focus on economic development serve as a non-voting liaison to the EDC. These may include such committees as the Zoning Review Committee, the Agriculture and Open Space Committee, the Conservation Advisory Council, Senior Services, Design Review/Hamlet, etc.

## Meetings

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It is recommended that the EDC meet bi-weekly for a ten month session with a summer hiatus in July and August. Annually the Chairperson will work with the committee to determine the agenda and a schedule of short term and long term goals to achieve during this period. This agenda will also allow for any unforeseen needs of economic development. It is believed that with an agenda, goals and dedicated committee members the EDC will be able to move efficiently towards fulfilling the vision for Red Hook.

This committee requires dedicated and committed members. Therefore, each member will be informed of the schedule of meetings and is allowed no more than four absences during the committee session. At the Chairperson's discretion, committee members who are unable to fulfill this rigorous schedule will be asked to resign from the Committee.

## Reporting

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In addition to the flow of communication between the various advisory committees and the EDC, quarterly meetings can also be held with each committee as its business pertains to economic development. The EDC should present updates and recommendations at least quarterly to the Town Board.

## Closing

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It is with great pride and honor that we present this report to the Red Hook Town Board. We trust that you will find these recommendations sufficient to proceed with the economic development of Red Hook.

Respectfully Submitted,

Economic Development Committee Task Force 2009

Michelle R. Martin, *Chairperson*

James Brudvig

Mary Ann Johnson

Beth Jones

Ed Pruitt