



# local matters

*Think local first!*

## WELCOME TO local matters

local matters is the new “voice” of the Belknap Independent Business Alliance.

This newsletter (published in print and electronic versions) is a bimonthly publication for, by and about the members of biba.

That means, in order to ensure its survival, that you, the biba membership, contribute to its content.

I invite any and all of you to consider submitted content to the newsletter and, if interested, to contact me at [kjsperl@lakesregionspirit.com](mailto:kjsperl@lakesregionspirit.com).

I can not, and should not, do it alone. I have accepted responsibility for the layout, creation, photography and distribution of local matters and, will, from time to time, contribute story content.

I invite you to send me your suggestions for the type of content you would like to see presented via this venue.

This is YOUR newsletter, help to make it so

Kevin Sperl  
Editor, local matters  
[kjsperl@lakesRegionSpirit.com](mailto:kjsperl@lakesRegionSpirit.com)

### LACONIA'S MAYOR ROUNDS UP BUSINESSES FOR A DISCUSSION



**Laconia** — Approximately 30 local business owners accepted Mayor Mike Seymour's invitation to gather at the Belknap Mill on Wednesday, September 15, for a round table discussion regarding business-to-city relationships.

Mike opened the gathering by describing his hopes for the meeting. “There are key business issues in this city,” he said. “I want to know how the city might become more cooperative in assisting local businesses.”

While acknowledging that there seems

to be a disconnect between business needs and the city's support of those needs, Mike was simply not interested, nor should he be, in hashing over problems of the past—he wanted to move forward. “I do not want this to be a gripe session,” said Mike.

“This is a forum for businesses to articulate what they need,” he concluded, opening the floor to questions, comments and suggestions.

For Warren Clement, former owner of The Sundial Shop and long-time advo-

cate for downtown, the need for a full-time city cheerleader is near the top of his list. “If someone comes to Laconia and says 'I want to open a widget factory,' who do they talk to?” he asked.

Warren's wish list included the need for an economic development director, a department-level 2-year plan and a desire to meet frequently.

Jim Vander Hooven, vice-president of student affairs at Lakes Region Community College, was one of many to

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## local matters EVENTS

### september

#### MEETINGS

**Laconia Business Roundtable**  
**September 29, 6 pm**

#### Belknap Mill

Second meeting with Laconia Mayor Mike Seymour discussing business-to-city relationships.

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### october

#### SPEAKERS

**Laurey Hammel, Executive Director of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Boston**

**October 6, 7 pm**

Laconia Middle School's Multi Purpose Room

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#### EVENTS

**Petal Pusher's Fall Festival**

**October 17, noon - 3 pm**

Coloring contest, Bouncy house, Concessions, Pony Rides, Hay Rides. biba members are invited to participate. Vendor booth space available. Contact Patty Gianunzio at 603.524.7253.

## MEET THE BOARD

### RYAN ROBINSON

Ryan grew up in the Lakes Region and made a very conscious move back to the area after graduating from college.

Ryan strongly believes in the importance of setting down long term roots and supporting grassroots, locally supported initiatives, such as BIBA.

Ryan teaches the Humanities at Laconia Christian School and is the Director of Business Development at Mainstay Technologies. He also enjoys reading classical literature, discussing theology and philosophy, and spending quality and quantity time with his wife and two children.



### FRANCIS MAINERI

Francis, owner of Paychecks of New Hampshire, has extensive experience in tax preparation, payroll and benefit services. A former "Chief Cook and Bottle Washer" of a bakery, Francis has two children and four grandchildren whom he enjoys with his wife of forty years, Karen.

Francis lists snowshoeing, golf, hiking and "riding my Harley with my biker chick" as his favorite ways to pass time outside of work. He also wants you to know that Karen is his "biker chick."

A resident of New Hampton, Francis hopes to someday indulge his passion for the outdoors and travel by touring as much of the country as possible.

"You can have everything you need in life if you have the supporting staff," is a motto Francis lives by, aptly applying it to his professional life (payroll, taxes and all that stuff) and to his family (Karen and his children Sarah and Joshua)

offer potential services in support of the mayor's initiative. "Tell us what you want and we will provide the resources to help," offered Jim.

Others hoped for cultural change in the relationship between City Hall and business owners in, admittedly, a city with diverse interests and an inherent resistance to change. Many in attendance noted the desire to create better links between sectors of the city.

City Councilor Brenda Baer went so far as to suggest the need for a marketing brand saying "Whatever it is, it must unify the city."

The group made note of a number of

upcoming opportunities, including the Colonial Theater project, expansion of the community college and development of the former prison property on Parade Road.

As an example of how other cities foster positive business relationships, Mike presented a copy of Burlington, Vt's *Doing business in Burlington*. A copy of the document may be found at [www.cedoburlington.org/business/doing\\_business\\_in\\_burlington/TheGuide.pdf](http://www.cedoburlington.org/business/doing_business_in_burlington/TheGuide.pdf).

In conclusion, Mike asked the group to consider the formation of a committee made up of himself and Councilor Baer along with representatives of city agen-

cies, the chamber and business community.

Regularly scheduled meetings would continue, open to all, at various venues throughout the city.

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 29 at 6 pm the the Belknap Mill.

Laconia's mayor is putting himself out there in a forum specifically addressing the needs of the local business community.

All city-centric members of biba are encouraged to attend.