

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Warner NH



April 2017

To the Town of Warner Selectboard,

In 2016, the Selectboard authorized the Economic Development Advisory Committee to be established ad hoc to investigate creating a permanent Economic Development Advisory Committee of the Town of Warner and to establish a general plan of action. The Committee has completed its work and offers the following recommendations as well as an Executive Summary and Work Plan that sets a potential Advisory Committee up for success.

The following recommendations are offered:

* Establish a permanent Economic Advisory Committee within the next six months, with the following organizational structure:

At least one designee from the following bodies; Selectboard, Planning Board, Conservation Committee.

Three (3) local business representatives approved by the Selectboard.

Six (6) members from the general public approved by the Selectboard.

All members of the committee to be rotating on a three year basis, with a term limit to be established at a later date. There is no statutory authority within New Hampshire other than 'advisory' to the Selectboard, so no decision-making or authorities may be extended to the Advisory Committee.

NH R.S.A.41:8 allows the Selectboard to establish such Advisory Committee based on its ability to manage the Town but there is no delegation of authority.

The Advisory Committee will meet with the Selectboard on a bi-monthly basis to report out on progress, seek action by the Selectboard and engage the Selectboard and members of the public on a regular basis.

- * Redesign and update the Town of Warner website in order to focus on tourism and economic activities that will enhance Warner's image, vitality and economic opportunities.

We have learned from State officials and experts in the field over the course of the past year that this is critical and often creates the first impression to businesses that may never initially communicate with anyone in Town.

- * Professionally develop and conduct an annual survey that assesses the needs and aspirations of the people in Warner and provides guidance on actions that lead to sustained economic prosperity.

Executive Summary

In 2016, the Select Board established an ad hoc Warner Economic Development Advisory (EDAC) Committee. The purpose of this committee is:

“To support the existing business community and to encourage economic growth that serves local needs, is environmentally responsible, fits aesthetically with the town’s historic architecture, and provides a net increase in municipal revenue” (Warner Master Plan).

The committee emanated from Master Plan recommendations which further states “that an economic development committee is to advise and implement economic development activities and provide an official liaison between the town and the business community”.

The Goal of the committee is to establish a plan that is essential to enhance and develop a sustainable community that encourages economic development within the context of healthy living for both residents and visitors.

The EDAC has had approximately 8 meetings, and invested many hours in outside research. We have started the initial internal educational process of defining community economic development and what it can mean for a small community like ours. We have read and reviewed numerous documents, invited and spoke with the representative from the State Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and have created working groups within our committee that are helping to define economic development goals and objectives.

With much additional discussion, research, and review of historical information from the Town including the master plan, surveys and results of the Town Charrette in 2004, we agreed that four (4) key areas were to be our initial focus. Organization and Education, Business Retention and Expansion, Business Development, and Tourism.

Using a standard goals, objectives and tasks methodology – we proceeded in setting up subcommittees to focus on four (4) specific sectors:’

1. Organization and Education
2. Business Retention and Expansion
3. Business Development
4. Tourism

These sectors were the foundation of developing the work plan.

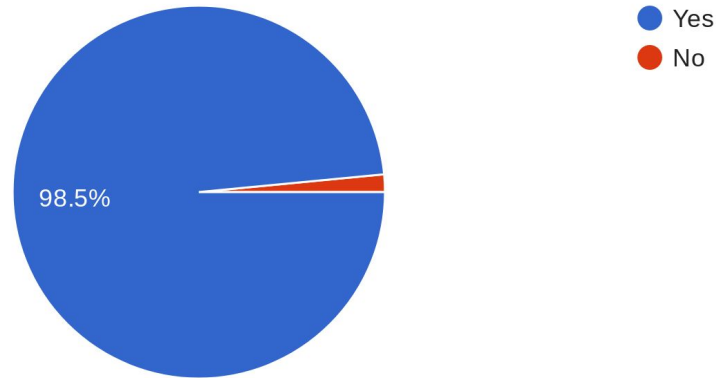
We plan to have an open process to inform and educate the community about economic opportunities, listen to suggestions and eventually implement a plan to improve the economic base of Warner.

2018 Economic Development Survey

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The presence of a central working village was rated of high or of very high importance by 82% of respondents to the 2008 survey of the Warner Town Master Plan. Is it important to you that Warner retain a strong commercial Main Street as new businesses locate within the town?

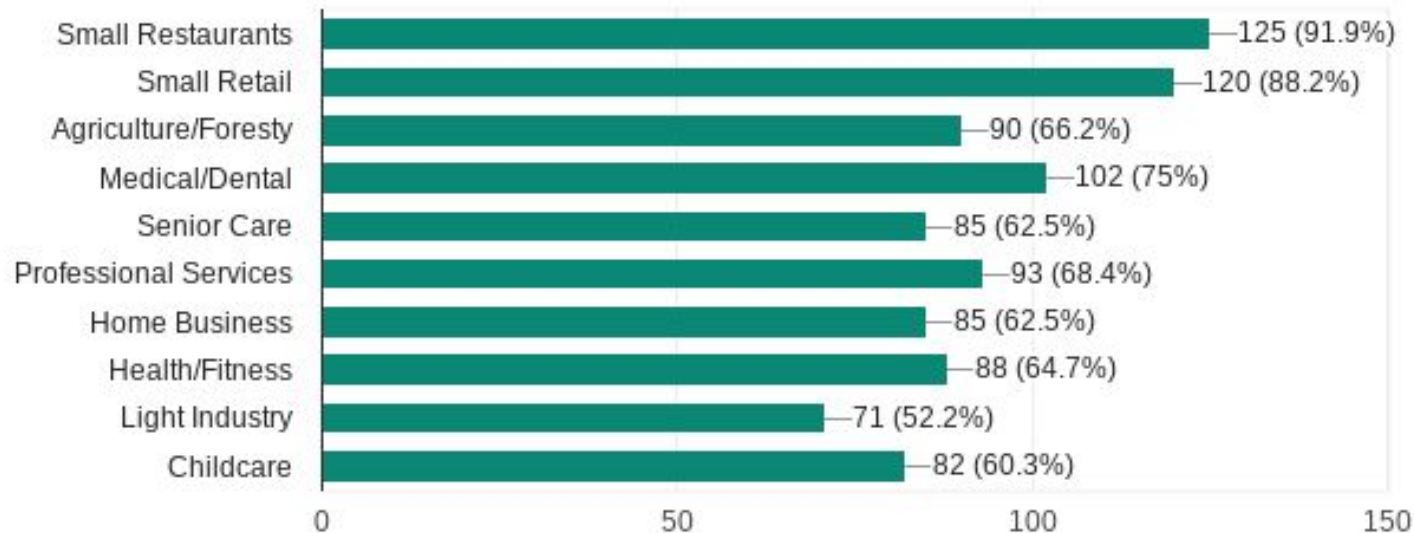
131 responses



Question 1

Tell us if retaining or encouraging additional businesses of this type is still as important to you. Check all that you would like to see in town.

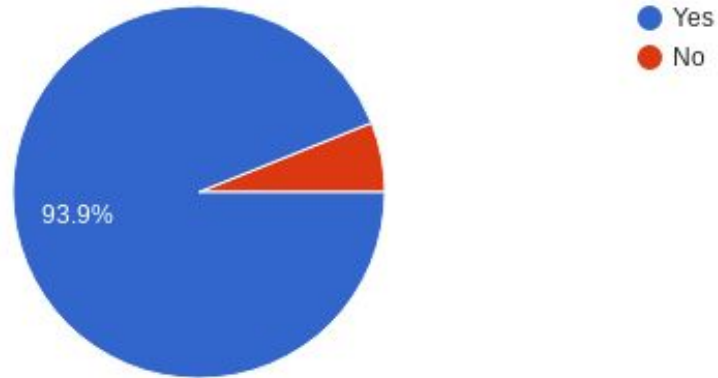
136 responses



Question 2

Per Warner's zoning exits 7 and 9 provide opportunities for business development in Warner. Do you support attracting businesses to these areas of Warner?

132 responses

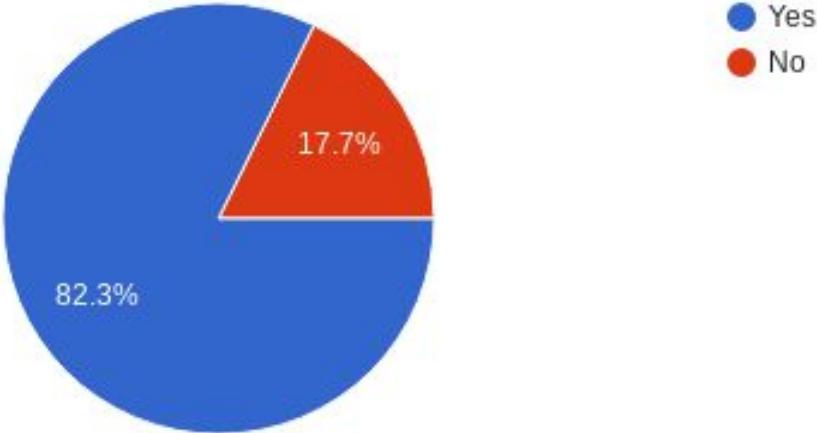


Question 4

Warner's current zoning for Commercial Districts allows for a maximum 40,000 sq. ft for an individual building. (Market Basket not including hardware store is 51,600 sq. ft and the new liquor store is 12,000sq. ft.)

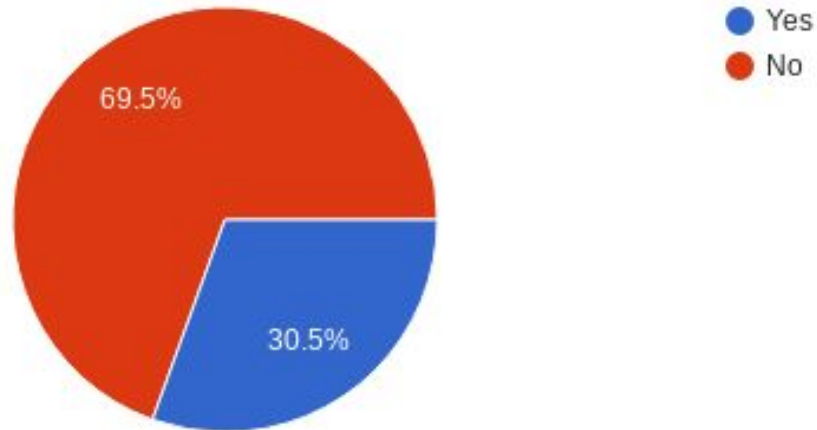
Do you think this maximum size is appropriate?

130 responses



Would you support larger scale buildings/businesses in the Commercial District that would be larger than the current 40,000 sq. ft. allowed?

131 responses

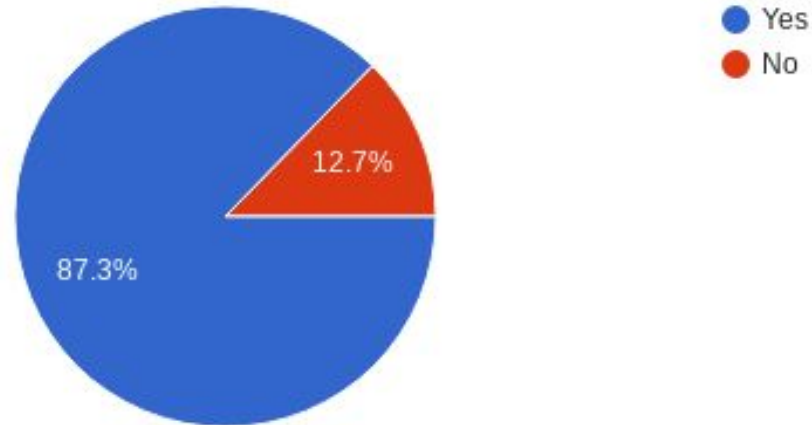


Question 7

In Warner's Business District (Main St. Village area) the maximum for an individual building is 4,000 sq. ft., about the size of a basketball court which is 4,700 sq. ft. and is also the approximate size of a retail store in downtown Warner such as MainStreet BookEnds.

Do you think this maximum size is appropriate?

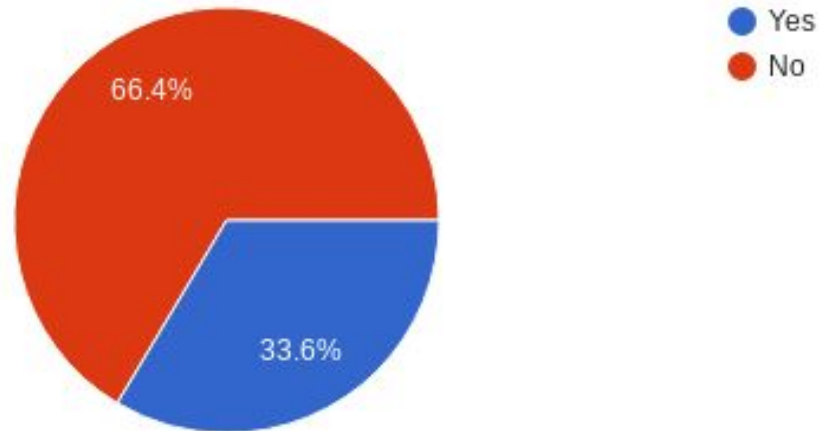
134 responses



Question 8

Would you support larger scale buildings/businesses in the Business District that would be larger than the current 4,000 sq. ft.?

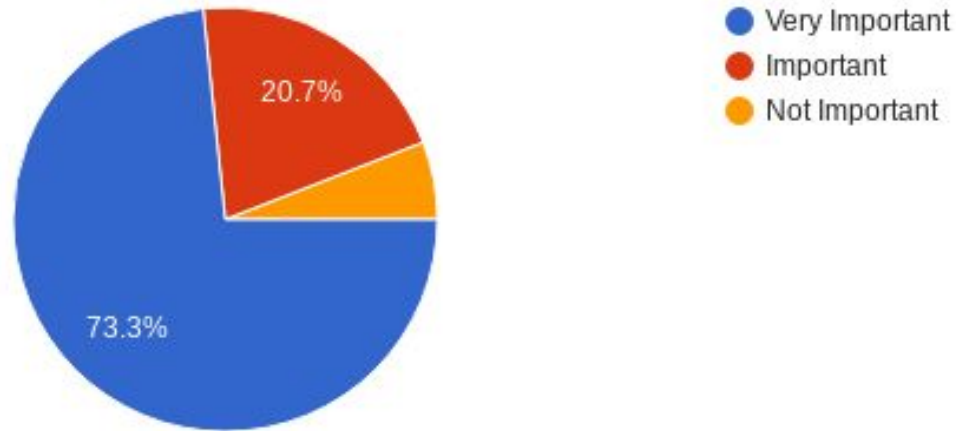
134 responses



Question 9

In your opinion, how important are festivals, music and events to the vibrancy and economic opportunities of Warner?

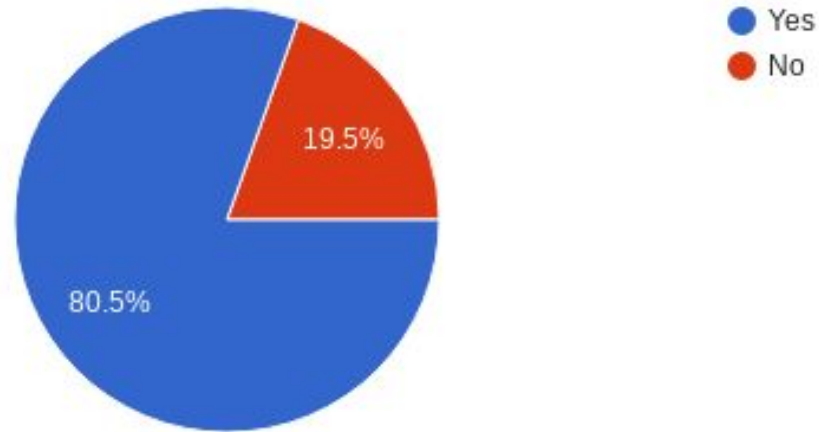
135 responses



Question 10

Should Warner attempt to expand events/music to increase tourism and local engagement/enrichment?

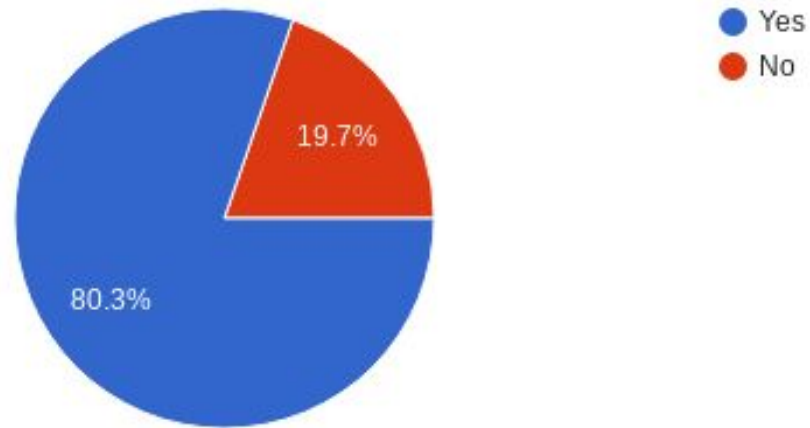
128 responses



Question 11

Would you like to see Warner marketed as a tourism destination to support local business?

132 responses



Question 12

The Mink Hills are an important part of Warner's history. It is also a tourist attraction. Warner has seen an increase in activity around outdoor recreation, especially in the Mink Hills. Is this an area that you feel the Warner needs to coordinate with other towns that border on the Minks to address responsible stewardship of this natural resource?

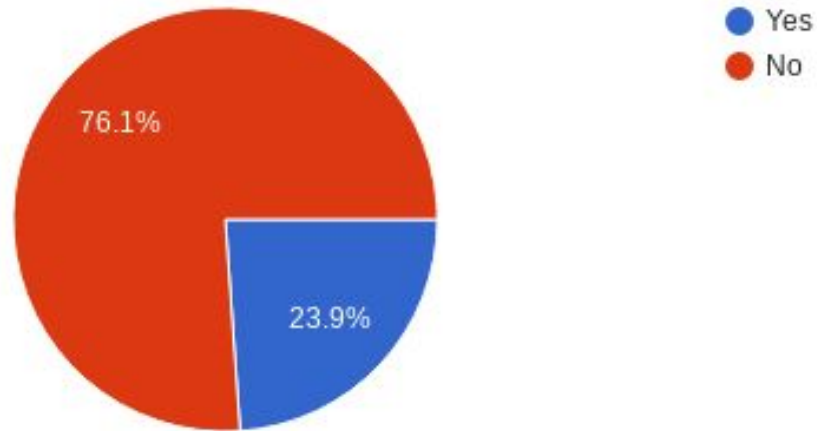
134 responses



Question 13

The Economic Development Advisory Committee found that most of Warner's small businesses are sole proprietorships, often located at home. Are you interested in starting or expanding a business in Warner?

134 responses

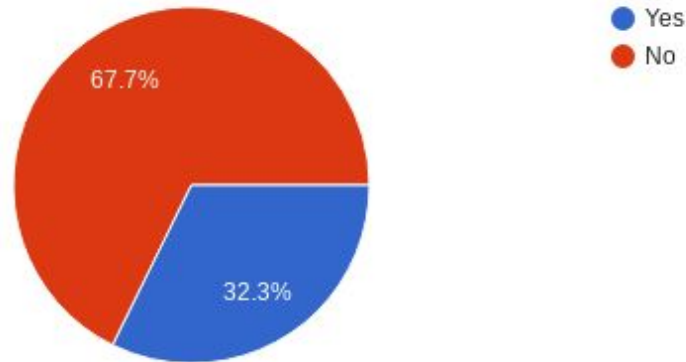


Question 14

A business incubator is a place or location that small businesses, such as a home business, can learn to grow. Services that can be provided could include training to improve marketing, financial accounting, program or project design, and other helpful services/information/training to help small business flourish.

Would you be interested in learning more about creating a business incubator in Warner that could provide a space for technical assistance mentioned above?

127 responses



Question 15

The most popular overall responses were a need for additional dining options (75 total responses across all 4 questions) and Hospitality type business (48 total responses across all 4 questions). After this the most common responses (greater than 10 total responses) were a need more healthcare options, interest in attracting engineering or biotech businesses, the need for an autoparts store, a local dental option, and interest in trying to attract a brewery to the area.

The breakdown for "What other types of business, industry or services would improve the quality of life for you in Warner?" followed the trend described above.

The breakdown for "If yes what type of businesses would you like to locate at these locations?" also followed the trend above.

Further Breakdown

The breakdown for "Would you support larger scale buildings/businesses in the Commercial District that would be larger than the current 40,000 sq. ft. allowed?"

Comments:" indicated that for folks who supported increasing the limit, they believed that the limit should be raised to help attract a hotel to that location.

The breakdown for "What would you like the Town to do with the old fire station?" differed slightly from this breakdown.

Selling the Fire Station location to make room for a restaurant or other dining option was still the most popular (28 total response), but after that the most common responses (defined as 5 or more total responses) were, in order:

- retaining it for use a Senior/Youth/Community Center
- using it as business center/incubator
- selling it for use a brewery location or a some variation of a co-op or indoor farmers market.

Further Breakdown

Draft Brochure Front

VISIT **Warner** NEW HAMPSHIRE

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



- Seasonal festivals
- outdoor concerts
- author events
- historical talks
- art exhibits
- open mic events



COVERED BRIDGES

Two historic covered bridges span the Warner River. The Dalton Bridge (12) and the Waterloo Bridge (13).



MUSEUMS

You'll find five museums, from historical to natural, we have something for everyone!



AGRICULTURE

Warner is a beautiful hub of working farms with everything from sweet corn to maple syrup.



RECREATION

Hike, bike, fish, snow mobile or cross country ski on any of our beautiful trails!

WARNER'S MAIN STREET

- restaurants
- museums
- community parks
- shops
- farmer's market
- and more!



warner.nh.us

Draft Brochure Back

Visit
Warner
Stay a while...

- ☛ Catch the view from the summit of Kearsarge Mountain
- ☛ Explore our covered bridges
- ☛ Find a treasure at a local shop or flea market
- ☛ Enjoy four seasons of outdoor recreation and trail use
- ☛ Stroll Main Street and shop local
- ☛ Grab a bite at one of our local restaurants
- ☛ Visit one of our many working farms and support a farmer
- ☛ Listen to live music, indoors or out
- ☛ Stay a while... we like having you!

For details visit us on the web at
warner.nh.us