



Economic Development Committee Minutes

April 4, 2025

9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 4/4/25, held virtually via Zoom.

PRESENT: EDC members Patty Sutherland, Shirley Ming, Michael Carpenter, David Cote (joined at 10 AM), EDC associate members Greg Jarboe, James Fuccione (Planning Board liaison joined at 10:30 AM), Fran Arsenault, (Select Board liaison), Patricia Costa (ED Director effective 4/7), Maura Haberman (EDC liaison), Citizens present Amol Patil, Mike Rogers

Ms. Sutherland called the meeting to Order at 9:30 AM.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meeting (March 14, 2025), Passed unanimously
- Public participation, none.

II. NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

- New Economic Development Director Begins April 7, 2025. Welcome Patricia!
- RKG Associates Status/Strategic Plan for Economic Development: Kristen is reviewing the initial draft from RKG. A full working draft of the plan by early May which will be shared with the EDC for comment. Then, a release of a draft plan for the general public to submit comments would be around mid-May. Then, at the end of May EDC will host a meeting where RKG would present the final draft plan. The EDC is working on finalizing a Wednesday evening date in late May to hold a public workshop. Proposing date for public workshop is May 21, 28 Wednesday evening 7:30. Shirley will coordinate the final date.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- Outreach/Communication Plan (Mike/Dave): Suggestion of zoom community meetings like what school committee is doing or all committees getting together. Local business tie-in with calendar holidays. Acton Exchange pizza article delighted the owners at 12 pizza places. <https://www.actonexchange.org/whats-on-your-pizza-a-march-madness-review/> Note: National Coffee Day – Sep 29, 2025 (Also National Adhesive Day)
- Housing Production Plan (Patty/Shirley): There were some questions for EDC, which will be redirected to town staff.
- EDC's goals for FY25: Patty noted that the Strategic plan is the highest priority. Increase engagement with business owners
- Member Updates/Inquiries: April Lunch Meeting with New ED (Patty/Maura). Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Legislation (Topic from Sharon via email). Team has agreed to restate the position, which was previously stated at the Town meeting. Sharon will represent the EDC at town meeting and potentially with Patricia C.'s with town meeting approval as a staff member. Town meeting participation for nonresident business owners. Mike mentioned that according to Dean Charter, member of select board, there is no intention for business owners who do not live in town to be not be allowed to speak at the upcoming town meeting.

- Businesses At-Risk (Topic from Sharon via email): Team discussed that Handworks – relocating to Acton Woods Plaza (CVS). Anita’s Shoe Boutique – loss of business with closing of Gould’s Clothing; has a second store in West Concord. Bueno Y Sano – no information available. Powers Gallery & Fine Framing – owner is retiring. Short discussion on Tariff impact on small businesses. There are multiple small businesses in town that primarily focuses on imported goods, such as specialty grocery and gift stores such as British Imports in west Acton. Maura mentioned that an additional category can be added to business directory for businesses of imported goods.

IV. MORE REGULAR BUSINESS

- ED Events & Ribbon Cuttings: April 7 - Acton Cycle, As You Like It, Luna, April 18 – The Shop. TBD – Twin Seafood (new owner); MinuteMan ARC (284 Great Rd); B Tone (near Roche Bros.); new martial arts location (near Bank of America on Great Road); Greenhouse on Hayward Road. J Crew – It is unclear whether it will open in Acton or Hudson. The new businesses can be identified through the permitting process.
- Silver Unicorn 3rd Annual Kids Graphic Novel Festival – May 3. Event includes book signing with authors across of country. Coordinate with town on shuttle and other business.
- Others: National Small Business Week – May 4 through 11. No activity this year. Patricia suggested to potentially host SBA match making event in the future. The town partners with SBA and organize regional banks for business owners. Patricia has attended an event in Norwood in the past. The Middlesex of Chamber of Commerce, which has closed, used to have monthly meetings times with SBA for business owners. Kelly’s Corner block party was held in the past for construction start, potential another one for closure. It is a great opportunity for the small businesses and the community to come together.
- 250th Anniversary (ongoing) – <https://actonma.gov/250> Discussed how EDC and help and the ideas of booking the restaurant reservation around historic houses.
- Restaurant Week Contest – October 20 through 27. Discussed the ideas of restaurant give away or concert series ticket. Food passport.
- Shop Small – Thanksgiving, November 27, 2025 through January 15, 2026. Business owners prefer prolong the shopping season with earlier start.
- DEI and other Community events- No DEI events to report. Nashoba Valley Chamber “Taste of Middlesex” was well attended. NVCoC Annual fundraising night is May 7. Groundbreaking McManus Manor is May 5.
- Updates from Town of Acton Boards and Committees -Nothing to report.
- Next meeting – May 2, 2025, Proposed 10:30 to 12pm and maybe in person.

V. CONSENT ITEMS

Votes are noted in the section above.

Next Steps and Action Items: Sharon and Patricia to sync on leaf blower restatement at town meeting. Shirley to coordinate the final date and time for Strategic Plan for Economic Development for public workshop. Patty to finalize the next meeting time and whether that will be in person.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this meeting: <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-18899>

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to EDC@actonma.gov