



Economic Development Committee Minutes

Friday, May 30, 2025

Zoom Meeting

10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of May 30, 2025 held via Zoom.

Called to Order: 10:35 AM

Present: Patty Sutherland, Shirley Ming, Michael Carpenter, Sharon Tchon Gruet, Fran Arsenault (SB Liaison-arrived 10:12), Maura Haberman (EDC Liaison), Patricia Costa (Econ. Development Director),

Greg Jarboe (Finance Board Liaison), James Fuccione (Planning Board Liaison)

Absent: David Cote

Citizens present: Robert E. Jackson, George Fex

PRELIMINARIES

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meetings (Friday, May 2, 2025)
 - Passed unanimously
- Public Concerns
 - Comments were sent to RKG to address
 - Potential members are waiting for interview from Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC). VCC's interview process is backed up.
- Public Participation

II. NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

Updates from Economic Development Director:

- **Brunch with SBA**, staff and business owners Wed, June 11, Town Hall, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. (8:40 to 8:50 for EDC comments). Patty Sutherland will be there to represent EDC.
- **Grant applications:** Vacant Storefront Program has potential 50K grant money. It can be shared amongst multiple business, e.g. 10K per new tenant. Deadline is June 4. The underutilized application cannot be submitted without specifying usage, and the property owner has not expressed interest in providing that information. There will be no application for this year. The former McDonald's at Kelley's Corner and old Toyota dealership on Great Road were previously discussed as potential candidates. Sewerage application is not part of the EDC. It is part of infrastructure and an ongoing grant that can be applied for in 2026. Patricia is following up on the process.
- **MAPC Cultural Arts Strategic Plan:** Patricia noted that over the next few months an inventory of Arts and History will be worked on with a focus on key commercial inventory. She noted the potential for mapping circuits that integrate arts and culture with recreational and retail opportunities. Maura noted that this could possibly be an Eagle Scout project? Installation focus would be for each sector in Town.
- **Additional Concepts** (Sharon): The Town has purview over utility boxes attached to two traffic lights—one near the train station and the other near the Ford dealership on Powder Mill Road. These boxes can be permitted/approved for painting by the Town Manager and the EDC

Director. There is a utility box in West Acton, but this would require a need to get a permit from the state (not sure if there is a fee) and if the boxes are located within a historic district, approval from the Historic Commission would also be required. For utility boxes on state-owned roads, such as Great Road or Route 111, a permit would be necessary, though it's unclear whether a fee applies. The Mass Cultural Council (MCC) offers a grant that could potentially fund the artwork. The team also discussed the idea of holding an art competition with a historic theme.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mike to have Sharon work with Patricia and the Economic Development Office to paint utility boxes at the ABRHS field building. Motion seconded by Shirley; motion passed unanimously.

- **RKG Associates Status/Strategic Plan for Economic Development & Presentation:** Patty encouraged the EDC to review and submit their comments before noon on Tuesday, June 3. The meeting will be held at the Rec. Center, 50 Audubon Drive at 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 3. Sharon and Patty confirmed they planned to attend.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Outreach/Communication Plan (Mike/Dave):** Mike presented a draft EDC Acton Business Owner Engagement Plan that he and Dave had worked on. The EDC commented on the following: The business guide that Julie started can be reviewed and updated. A one-page overview and checklist would be a great starting point for business owners. Signage is a frequently asked question from businesses. Patricia noted that there is a Signage Guide already in place. Business meetups/workshops are a great idea. Create a directory of resources (there is one currently one online on the Actonma.gov website – find ways to make it more visible). Mike presented a draft survey to send to all businesses. Various means to advertise the survey were noted, however, the Marion Maxwell Acton Senior Citizens Newsletter is no longer available. It was noted that it would be better to trim down the survey questions to make them more concise, and have survey take ideally no longer than 5 minutes. Given the current demographics, language translation for the survey was discussed prioritizing Hindi and Chinese. Mike will send the draft plan to EDC members for their independent feedback.
- **Housing Production Plan** – Patty reported that the HPP has been completed.
- **Town Meeting – Follow-up:** Sharon presented EDC's position on Leaf blower during town meeting, the article was amended to delay implementation until 2028. The EDC discussed that smaller landscaping companies have a larger financial impact noting that the cost of batteries is a budget buster. Another concern was the cost of increased time it may take when using a gas blower vs. electric blower. Will businesses drop out of jobs in Acton. It would be good to understand formal business impacts from Acton based landscaping and nearby community landscaping business in different sizes. Patty was present on Tuesday evening and presented the EDC position in favor of Article 13. Patty was present on Monday evening and spoke in favor of RH Adhesives Fire Suppression Upgrades receiving Article 10 Appropriate Community Preservation Funds. This supported the letter written to the CPC in favor of the RH Adhesive application several weeks ago. The grant was approved. Maura will gather a list of landscaping companies and send to Patty.
- **Member Updates:** Patricia and Maura are following up with VCC on applications for potential EDC members.
- **EDC Goals for FY2026:** This agenda item is a reminder to start goal discussion early for the next year. This item has been tabled to the next meeting. EDC members are requested to send goals for 2026.

IV. MORE REGULAR BUSINESS

- **ED Events & Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies:** Maura noted that the Majestic Day Spa's Ribbon Cutting this morning went well. Flyers for upcoming events were shared including Wireless Zone

Verizon (Fri, June 27) which will actually be a two-day event. They are planning to do some larger activities on Saturdays. bTone Fitness Acton (Fri, July 11) is scheduled to have their Ribbon Cutting. Handworks Gallery in the Great Woods Plaza would like to have a Ribbon Cutting for their new location in about two weeks. Pedal Power is celebrating 50 years in business and is being recognized in the upcoming Business Boost E-Newsletter. There is a Bike Share event on June 13 and this flyer will be sent to all EDC members following the meeting. EDC members will help get the word out on the various events via their social media pages.

- **Summer Concert Series** is starting soon. Maura reported she has been working on sponsorships and we depend on this funding to help offset the cost of the events.
- **Restaurant Week & Contest** (Oct. 20-27) – Place holder – tabled to future meeting.
- **Shop Small** – Thanksgiving, November 27, 2025 thru January 1, 2026- Place holder – tabled to future meeting.
- **DEI and Other Community Events:** Maura noted there is a Juneteenth (June 19) event that has been scheduled and will forward the flyer to the EDC to share. It will be held at the Acton Congregational Church from 2-4 p.m. At the Bike Share event on June 13, sports, sportswear and health businesses can have a table. The Lions Club is having the Annual Town Fair on the School Street Fields (June 19-22).
<https://www.bostonareagleaners.org/junefoodday.html>
- **Updates from Town of Acton Boards & Committees:** No reports were made.
- **Next Meeting:** Tentative, Friday, July 18, 2025, 10:30 a.m. to Noon. Shirley noted she cannot make the July or August meeting. Maura noted she cannot make the July 18th meeting.

V. CONSENT ITEMS

Votes are noted in the section above.

Next Steps and Action Items:

- Patricia Costa to follow up on sewage related application to see which town department is leading that effort.
- Sharon to assist Patricia C. for future utility box painting project coordination.
- Mike to share the communication plan to EDC for independent feedback.
- EDC members are requested to send goals for 2026.
- Maura will gather a list of landscaping companies and send to Patty.
- Maura will forward information for: Lions Club Fair, Juneteenth, Bike Share

Additional material:

<https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-19260>

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

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