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Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2010
7:00 pm
Room 204
Acton Town Hall

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Attending: Doug Tindal, Leigh Davis Honn, Nancy Dinkel, Ann Chang, Dick Calandrella, Chris Pappas, David Didricksen, Terra Friedricks, Joe Ianelli

7:05pm Meeting begins w/Open Mike for Citizen Issues:
Darren Jones, E-Mass Solar Store, occupancy permit for Weatherbee Plaza location
Recommended he follow up with Leo (building owner). Leo needs to send email to
Planning Department that all outstanding items on permit have been completed.
They can then check on completion. Planned Grand Opening May 15th.

7:30 New sub-committee supporting existing business – David Didricksen and Willa Breez

Signage by-law review/enforcement
Three-step process 1) Verbal notification – non-conforming sign
2) Written notification
3) District court

Dick and Ann waiting to hear from Nina on setting up the panel to review
businesses/tickets currently issued – most will be adjudicated by the panel, some will
go to District Court

Handbook/brochure for business process/policies should be developed

Community education workshops will be offered (“Sign Fair”)

Discussion on businesses who have been ticketed – identify the kinds of issues that
cause violations – review by-laws and permitting process so ongoing
education/comprehensive documentation is available

Dick contacted Bob Burgess & Rick Degon on PR ideas:
Weekly profile of businesses/owners
Bob thought it was a good idea and thought they should have unique angles
for stories
Rick thought it was a good idea and reminded Dick that committee members
must do filming and editing of programming

Marketing Ideas – Leigh and Nancy productive meeting w/David Didricksen. Buy
Local, Cultural Sampler, Directory Publication with all businesses (divided by type
of business)

Nancy raised discussion on the opportunity for the Buy Local signage “I contribute \$xxxx to the local economy” which would include taxes, services purchased, suppliers, building maintenance & repair, salaries, etc

Other business promotion ideas:

Appreciation Days/Buy Local

Back-to-School

Holiday Event

Cultural Appreciation – celebrating the diversity in Acton businesses

Discussion of town staff training – customer service training, sensitivity training

Demographics – Dick and Joe will schedule appt with Steve LeDoux

Marketing – Does Chamber have people to help staff sub-committee?

New & Existing Business – David needs to broaden the leadership of this new committee – will be talking with Willa Breez

Ann raised the discussion of scheduling a Chamber business breakfast at Town Hall with town staff

Joe asked about staffing needs and asked about Doug’s meeting with the AB school leadership. Doug reported that they can’t be small projects, needs plan – curriculum. Potential for string of internships with required reading materials and work-study components. May be a program different departments like Planning, Water District, etc., all areas of operating a town.

Ann mentioned the job shadowing program with prior town departments

Nancy thought we might be able to utilize journalism students for the business story interviews for the Beacon or for the Cable Access programming

Ann – reminder – Community Service Day – April 30th

Other Business:

3/25 Minutes – motion to approve – Ann

2nd by Nancy

Approved by all

Action Items:

Kristin – Will talk with HR about staff training options

Nancy – Talk with Sarah Fletcher – Chamber members for sub-committee staffing, as well as potential for breakfast event at Town Hall

Ann/Dick – Follow up with Nina on panel for sign adjudication process

Doug – Signage – send email to Planning Dept on solar store business’s behalf

Leigh – Complete EDC business survey. Start to organize Business Directory from Acton business list (from Town Clerk)