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EDC Minutes May 20, 2010

TOWN CLERK, ACTON
Present: Doug Tindal, Dick Calandrella, Joe Ianello, Nancy Dinkel, David Didriksen, Chris Papas, & Ann Chang. Kristen Alexander, support staff.

1. No open Mike

2. Discussion of the meeting on the 19th with Town Counsel & Scott Mutch from the planning department.

Members at that meeting: Dick, Ann, Nancy & David. The tenor of the meeting was that they would tell the EDC what they thought was proper for the EDC to do.

Dick reported that Scott handed out a spreadsheet with all the violations duly noted. Everyone agreed that this was a great help to the process. Dick expressed the extreme frustration felt by all the members at the lack of progress & the very limited role for the EDC. This point was reiterated (by all those attending the May 19th meeting) several times in different ways.

There was additional discussion as to what the EDC could do that would be OK in the eyes of Counsel & what the business community expected. David pressed his point that the bylaw is not enforced fairly and lacks consistency.

There was an understanding that the actions by the EDC were limited to the names listed on page four of Scott's printout.

Dick listed the problems that the Town seemed to not recognize: lack of positive PR; lack of a human touch; lack of consistency in the enforcement and seeming arbitrariness in the handing out of citations of non-compliance and fines.

Ann was concerned that there were businesses that paid their fines & as yet had not come into compliance. This seemed to indicate that there might be some confusion on the part of the business owners as to the difference between a permit fee and a non-compliance fine.

There was concern about the costs of Town Counsel in this process.

ACTION ITEMS:

Call Nina—where's the draft of the letter

Send letters drafted by Dick to rest of the committee, Town Counsel & Town Manager

Try to push for PR in the paper explaining where the process is now.

Extra thoughts: the spreadsheet clearly shows that the special events signs and window signs received the most citations. These are the areas that need to be explained to the business community. It was suggested that a letter be posted to the entire business community (in addition to the newspaper releases) saying the inspector would eventually get to their section of town & that the most common

errors happen in the two listed areas. The letter would show compliance and non-compliance pictures along with the verbiage from the bylaw. It would also be helpful if they were to gather their permits together to help the inspector when he does visit.

David stressed that any materials sent out should acknowledge the benefit that the business community is to the town. He also hoped that those doing the inspections realized this as well.

3. Demographics

Joe reported that it appears that the town staff does not have the time to do the digging for the demographics and the Town will hire a consultant to do the job.

There was a bit of consternation at this point especially when it was discovered that the only bid answering the RFP was the company who did part 1. Some felt that the work was not very good and a different consultant needed to be hired. Joe said the report prepared by the consultant "was the worst I've ever read."

4. Good news

David reported on his efforts to start a "Buy Local" campaign. He is working with Willa Breeze from Kitchen Outfitters. Twenty merchants are involved ten are in West Concord.

Update: Darrin Jones is still talking with Leo about the space he wants to rent. Leo still has outstanding portions of the project he has yet to finish. Jones, when he first came to the EDC wanted to open on May 17th.

Kristen remained us of the Kelley's Corner Open House on 5/25/10. Doug reminded us to think about recruitment needs.

The minutes were accepted as corrected. Every meeting a different member will take the minutes.

Adjourned 9:15

Ann Chang