

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 9/7/17, held in Room 9 of Acton Town Hall.
Present: Selby, Mike Majors, Derrick Chin, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah
Absent: David Foley, Peter Daniel, Chingsung Chang, Dave Didriksen, Ann Chang
Called to Order: 7:30 pm

I. Public Participation:

“Seeing no public...,” says Larry.

II. Minutes from 7/6 and 8/3:

Minutes from 7/6 were approved with one edit of attribution.
Minutes from 8/3 were approved with zero changes.

III. Discussion Topics

- a) Insulet Update: Their groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for 9 am on Thursday, September 28, 2017 at 100 Nagog Park. Selby said that Insulet had asked for a waiver for the remainder of their building permit fee. They've since wavered on that; there are invitations to meet, with accompanying counsels. Governor Baker will be there, and some local officials and legislators have been invited. Derrick Chin welcomed Katie Green standing up for the town at the BOS meeting where Insulet asked for the waiver (something on the order of \$750,000 out of a little over \$1 million). The estimate of the fee was actually overestimated by their consultant. Their tax deal is one of the most generous in recent state history, but they're worried about the clawback. They're looking to be sold, and because the unpaid taxes are a liability, it makes it harder to get that payday.
- b) South Acton: the civil defense building is sellable; then, there's a vacant lot that was inherited by someone; after that, there's a parking lot temporarily used as commuter parking; then, there's School Street Garage, owned by a couple who live in town. Selby met with HDC and two property owners and developers to see if we could build something better and more cohesive. If one owner can buy the other out, so it's just one owner and the town to work with. We're waiting on the next step to happen. It would also make more sense to have a coffeeshop on the inbound side of the tracks; the nearby owner has done some permit-less work with zoning and wetland violations. He may be looking to sell; we hope it's to us.

Selby has also done work looking at attracting hotels to the 348-364 Main Street space. He said chains won't touch property for the size we're envisioning; they'd want to start at 100-120 rooms. Selby is doing an analysis of how many rooms are within a 10-mile radius of that site. He estimates there are about 2000 in that space. He visited the Publick House in Sturbridge; they have a boutique inn, but they have other services that can support that operation. Those owners also run the Colonial Inn; they might be interested in a few years, but they're just breaking ground on another project now. \$10,000 would get us a proper hotel analysis; meanwhile, there is interest from other town interests to look at affordable housing on that site. Selby feels confident that, if we were able to re-zone that parcel commercial, we could sell it for \$2.5-3 million. Hotels would absolutely be interested in a long-term lease on that lot.

Next Wednesday, Selby is going on a business trip! Wahoo! There's a professional development fund in town, so he's going to check out the annual meeting of the IEDC (International Economic Development Council) in Toronto. You can also become a certified economic developer; the standards are rigorous! The failure rate of the exam is fine!

We briefly discussed being mindful of the economic development possibilities associated with the upcoming expansion and opening of the Bruce Freeman and Assabet River Rail Trails. It would require some out-of-pocket costs on behalf of some businesses and some permit-pulling...but it all seems doable.

Derrick said Brookside Shops has three vacancies: Gymboree, EMS, and Cambridge Savings Bank; the first two are closing due to national chain struggles. Abutters now have an agreement with the property managers, especially now that there are these vacancies and the whiff of failure; the BOS will likely bring a zoning change proposal to the December Town Meeting.

Larry will do an informal survey at future meetings of new and closing businesses in Acton.

During our next scheduled meeting, Kelley's Corner Steering Committee will be holding a hearing on zoning amendments, so we'll trek upstairs to participate in that. Next EDC meeting will be October 5, 2017.

IV. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm. Go Pats!