



Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

12/5/19

6:00 pm

Room 9, Acton Town Hall, Acton, MA

Present: Members—Larry Kenah (Chair), Derrick Chin, Mike Majors, Ann Chang, Jon Benson, Josh Fischel (Clerk), David Didriksen, Shirley Ming

Absent: Peter Daniel, David Foley

Chair Larry Kenah opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

1. Review of Meeting Minutes from 11/7/2019 – **The meeting minutes from the EDC’s 11/7/19 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 6-0, with minor, mostly typographical amendments.**
2. Public Participation—There is none.

II. New/Special Business

3. Special Town Meeting Articles

- Fire Station in North Acton: Jon Benson leads the committee through some slides which will presumably be shown at next week’s Town Meeting. Some instructive points: 25% of Acton’s population is age 60 and older. With fires, speed counts: fires double in size every 30 seconds. We’re aiming for a maximum of six minutes response time. The ladder truck will move from South Acton to North Acton because more of the four-story buildings are there. There will be a half-mile of sidewalk added near the North Acton fire station. The total preliminary cost estimate (construction + indirect costs + contingencies) is \$10.3 million. The Select Board will be asking to borrow \$1.9 million from the Avalon fund. The average single family home will experience a \$62-67 tax increase per year.

—We discuss whether the EDC should present a position on this topic and discuss whether it’s entirely necessary.

- West Acton sewers: Ann Chang talks about whether sewers might be broken into two separate issues, with a vote to accommodate the new schools this time around, and another vote on West Acton’s sewers in April. This will be decided at the Select Board’s meeting tomorrow. Ann points out various flaws in opponents’ arguments. Larry Kenah asks for the better angels of our nuanced arguments to aid his EDC statement. David Didriksen asks about why people seem particularly opposed to this. It is a large betterment fee and it is not shared town-wide. “We have a tortured history with sewers,” says Jon Benson, memorably. “We have to break the culture.”



There was public contribution from a business owner in West Acton about the high cost of betterment for her property. There was sentiment expressed by individual committee members that perhaps the cost should be shared town-wide.

4. 2020 meeting days and times:

- January, on the third Thursday, at 7 pm.
- February and March, 1st and 3rd Thursdays, at 7 pm (twice a month in anticipation of Town Meeting)
- April—December, 1st Thursday only, at 7 pm.

5. Updates from Selby:

- There is a dumpster in front of Willow Books, but the town is not sure what's happening at the property.
- Paul Swydan of Silver Unicorn contacted Selby to gather information about local businesses.
- The Concordian is going to become the Minuteman Hotel. They need a use special permit from the Select Board.
- Re: Bruce Freeman Rail Trail; there should be access and signage to businesses for trail users. Mike Majors recommends that there be standards for that.
- AES would like to expand its parking lot, perhaps for school bus use
- West Side Creamery is expanding to NARA Park, at the snack bar; Andy Richard was going to come talk with us—we'll try to get him in in January

6. Updates from members:

- David asks Derrick Chin if the town officially qualifies for 40B safe harbor. Derrick confirms that that is the case.

Additional materials:

- Draft meeting minutes from 7 November 2019

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.