



Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

9/5/19

7:30 pm

Room 9, Acton Town Hall, Acton, MA

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

Absent: Peter Daniel, David Foley

Chair Larry Kenah opened the meeting at 7:31 pm.

I. Regular Business

1. Review of meeting minutes from 18 July 2019

The meeting minutes from the EDC's 7/18/19 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 7-0, with a pair of minor amendments.

2. Public participation

There is none.

II. New/Special Business

3. Possible EDC projects from Judi Barrett project

Ann Chang synthesizes the report's findings as saying we need to build the website and make Selby's presence as an economic development director more obvious on the website. David Didriksen asks how much the town paid for the study; the answer is \$0. (A grant funded it.) There is discussion about how exactly we can act on this report, and what we have control over. Larry asks about the suggestion that we visit businesses more often. Selby says he considers that his job; for instance, he visited every one of the restaurants participating in Acton Restaurant Week. Mike Majors suggests we have a few community events each year to get people together and to promote local businesses. There is discussion about that, and whether it always has to be at NARA Park for the sake of geographical diversity. Selby is working on updating and developing website content now. We can support sewers. We could use a zoning by-law re-write. Larry Kenah asks if we can push, as the EDC, for our page to be built out in particular. Ann Chang asks Jon Benson to push the Board of Selectmen to make sure funds are available for Selby to achieve this aim. Selby suggests that he'll contact the architects of the Holliston EDC website and ask some questions.

4. Restaurant week (reminder)

a. September 16 - September 22



Selby has been doing a lot of work on this, and has learned a lot about how to improve on the experience for next year. The committee is urged to call participating restaurants and ask what their Restaurant Week deal is, to encourage them to post it on their website.

5. EDC web page (Selby)

See discussion in item 3, above.

III. More Regular Business

6. Update from members

Ann Chang says there will be a forum on sewers on September 12th. It is likely to be on the December Town Meeting ballot, along with the fire station and the new elementary schools.

Jon Benson has reached out to Natalie Toomey to set up an Insulet tour for the EDC and the Finance Committee. He is waiting to hear back.

Larry Kenah says that the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee had a landscape design planning workshop to talk about sidewalks, trees, and lights. There was a follow-up meeting last Wednesday; the 75% plan will be submitted on October 1st, which is the next milestone as far as MDoT is concerned.

Mike Majors says that Minuteman opened this week, fully populated with a wait list. The next step is for the old school to be demolished and turned into athletic fields.

7. Updates from Economic Development Director

Selby reports that Insulet's token Acton resident has left the company to start a new company to 3-D print organs. He has been extended an invitation to be a part of the EDC. Sparx Hockey makes a high-end skate sharpening tool—Selby has reached out to them to congratulate them on their growth and success.

September 17th from 3 to 5 is the next Acton Area Manufacturing Collaborative Summit.

Selby applied to have Great Road designated by the state as a vacant storefront area. There are eight storefronts on Great Road that have been vacant for a year or more. Were the state to grant that designation, a business would get a tax credit to open in a vacant storefront, but we would have to match that credit, which Selby said no to. When he looked at the nine communities that are being considered for this designation, he found that the source of municipal funds was largely federal block grants, several of which Acton just wouldn't qualify for. He wants to know what the EDC thinks we should offer in terms of loans or grants. Mike Majors throws out \$10- or \$20-thousand as a possible match amount that could potentially get through FinComm. David is uncomfortable with a program that only focuses on new businesses, leaving existing businesses out in the cold. Ann Chang suggests funding a sign and facade grant for businesses along the rail trail.

IV. Consent Items

8. None



Additional materials

- Draft meeting minutes from July 18, 2019
- Slides from Judi Barrett (7/24/2019)

The meeting is adjourned at 9:27 pm.