



These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 11/5/20, held remotely at 7 pm

Called to Order: 7:01 pm

Members Present: Mike Majors, Ann Chang, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah, Shirley Ming, Jon Benson (arrived at 7:21), Dan Malloy, Derrick Chin, David Didriksen, Catherine Usoff

Staff Present: Selby (Economic Development Director)

Members Absent: Peter Daniel

“Good evening. **It is 7:03 pm.** This Open Meeting of the Economic Development Committee is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth, and the Local State of Emergency declared by the Acton Board of Selectmen and Board of Health due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus.

“In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Board of Selectmen has suspended all public gatherings, and in accordance with the Governor’s Order all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Governor’s Order, allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations and Committee votes of the meeting.

“Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment from invited guests. For this meeting, the Economic Development Committee is convening by video conference via the Zoom application. The meeting agenda posted on the Town’s Website calendar indicates how the public may join.

“Please note that this meeting is being recorded and that some attendees are participating by video conference. Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you and anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

“All of the materials for this meeting, except for any Executive Session materials, are available in the public DocuShare folder, and we recommend that the members and the public follow the agenda as posted.

“We are about to turn to the first item on the agenda. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business, and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- Selby or I will introduce each speaker on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, I will then go down the line of Members, inviting each by name to provide any comment, questions, or motions. Please hold until your name is called. Further,
 - o Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking;
 - o Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes
- For any response, please wait until the Chair yields the floor to you, and state your name before speaking.
- If members wish to engage in discussion with other members, please do so through the Chair, taking care to identify yourself.

“After members have spoken, the Chair will afford public comment as follows:

- o The Chair will first ask members of the public who wish to speak to identify their names and addresses only after first being recognized by the Chair, and will be afforded two minutes for their comment or question.
- Finally, each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote. This requirement extends to the vote to adjourn.”

I. Regular Business

1. Review of meeting minutes from 3 September 2020 and 1 October 2020
Minutes from 1 October are passed with minor changes, 7 for, 2 abstain due to absence
Minutes from 3 September are passed with a single change, 8 for, 1 abstain due to not yet being on the EDC

2. Public participation

Member of the public suggests a drive thru window survey focused only on business owners rather than for the general public.

David Didriksen follows up that he thinks there's value to this, so that there's information about who might be interested in having a drive-thru. Selby points out that the existing survey, which already has 1600 responses, allows respondents to indicate that they're business owners and teases out their interest.

II. New/Special Business

3. Powder Mill Road Corridor (Selby)

Maynard took the lead on a pair of grants to do a study of the Powder Mill Corridor in Maynard and Acton. There will be a public forum taking the place of our next meeting. There is a 10-page draft zoning analysis and a market analysis; Selby asks us to review those prior to the meeting. We will attend as individuals, but not participate as a body.

4. Buy Local campaign update

West Acton Village Merchant Association purchased lawn signs; there are A-frame signs and banner signs; the Chamber of Commerce bought 50 signs to distribute; John Raguin asked about electronic message boards to broadcast the campaign, and Selby will coordinate that effort.

5. Restaurant Week update (Peter Daniel and Selby)

Anecdotally, Le Lyonnais and Rapsallion saw people coming in and ordering off the restaurant week menu; poor weather prevented outdoor dining, and not many restaurants offered special menus, so that may have limited the impact, but we will forge ahead with another one in the spring, in all likelihood.

Small business grant checks went out a month ago: 43 checks for \$4,000. We also found out that we'll be receiving a \$1.6 million regional grant with Boxborough, Westford, and two other towns, for micro-enterprises (5 employees including the owner, whose family must meet income requirements). Selby is worried about distributing these funds, and wants to hire a part-time employee to help administer it. We have a year to spend the money; Selby knows there are people who will qualify in our community.

6. Kelley's Corner update (Larry)

GPI, the engineering project management firm, submitted the 100% plan to MassDOT; it will be posted soon to the town website. The steering committee met recently; a set of signs will guide people through Kelley's Corner and the surrounding area while construction is going on. GPI hired consultants to figure out signage; the committee agreed on the most straightforward-looking ones. There was also some mention of 'wayfinding'—literally, how you find your way. Acton is hoping to piggyback on that effort to help people navigate the entire town. A capital expenditure that will appear on an upcoming Town Meeting warrant regards pedestrian lighting, which the state will not pay for. We already have some of this money in the bank. These lights would be decorative *and* for safety, about 15 feet off the ground.

III. More Regular Business

7. Updates from members

Mike Majors says he noticed, by Nagog, that the new breakfast place in the old Bickford's is getting ready to go. He suggests sending them a welcome package from the EDC or from town.

8. Update from Director of Economic Development

The RFP for the 3 School Street project is out; 2 site walk-throughs have been scheduled so far, including Habitat for Humanity. The owner of the School Street Garage property seems interested in developing his building into six housing units. The owner of Exchange Hall's intention is to convert that to residences, too. It's a hard time for commercial development.

Jon Benson says that the K-Mart Plaza is under option agreement from a local group. It *is* zoned commercial, which protects that from residential development. When they close on the parcel, they'll be willing to talk and share their plans. Selby has had several conversations with a representative from the group, and thinks they would be unwilling to talk with the EDC. Once the Market Basket opens up in Maynard, it may force the closure of the Stop & Shop on 62, which may make them change what they want to do with the K-Mart Plaza location.

Town Hall is unlikely to re-open this month, as John Mangiaratti had originally planned.

Mike Majors asks about the use of the Asa Parlin House near the library. There's a question of what it can be used for; Jon Benson says that, through benign neglect over 20 years, it's been let go.

9. Next meeting—3 December 2020 (combined public forum)

The first Thursday in January is the 7th. Larry Kenah suggests we continue to meet on only the first Thursday of the month in January and February before switching to twice a month as our delayed Town Meeting approaches.

Move to adjourn passes unanimously at 8:04.

IV. Consent Items

9. None

Additional materials

- Draft meeting minutes from 3 September 2020 and 1 October 2020