

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01720
MEETING MINUTES (September 16, 2010)

(**APPROVED** at November 4, 2010 EDC Meeting)

Prepared By Associate Member Dick Calandrella

LOCATION --- Acton, Massachusetts Town Hall (Room 204)

MEMBERS ATTENDING --- Doug Tindal / Joe Ianelli / Leigh Davis-Honn / Chris Pappas / Nancy Dinkel / David Didriksen / Ann Chang / Associate Member Dick Calandrella

GUESTS ATTENDING --- Roland Bartl (Town Planner) / Jim Snyder-Grant (Acton 2020 Committee) / Sahana Purohit (Acton 2020 Committee) / Brian Barber (Planner's Collaborative) / Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann (Acton Historic District Commission)

MEETING BEGINS --- 7:11 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION --- none

APPROVAL OF MINUTES --- minutes from August 19, 2010 and September 2, 2010 unanimously approved as amended

DEMOGRAPHICS TEAM UPDATE --- Doug provides background and discusses how EDC can interact with the Acton 20-20 group (new name for the Acton Comprehensive Community Planning Committee).

When asked about the difference in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the CCPC. Jim said Phase 1 was "Visioning" / Phase 2 will be "Data Gathering" / Phase 3 will be "Implementation."

There was brief note made of the EDC's data gathering effort now underway through its "Data Inventory" and the EDC "Business Survey."

Brian then spent some time talking about data sources being developed by Planner's Collaborative, and the purchase of data and the scope of the data. He noted that the State Department of Employment & Training was a good data source.

SIGNAGE ISSUES --- Doug provides background and focuses on West Acton. Discusses need to interact with Historic District Commission. David talks about business anger and attitude, especially how to explain signs that are grandfathered. Kathy

provides background on HDC – notes there are 190 HDC properties in Acton – says mission of HDC is to preserve and improve.

Kathy notes contract of attitude for 2 business in West Acton – 1 that is trying to comply with all HDC requirements for signage and another that is resisting HDC requirements for signage. She notes all West Acton businesses have been sent a letter in Spring 2010 and that many have been personally contacted.

Ann brings up point that HDC rules & regulations state NO window signs of any type are allowed in an historic district (section 3.2.12). This contrasts with town rules & regulations that allow certain types of window signs. This leads to discussion about how EDC and HDC must closely cooperate & coordinate in dealing with businesses.

Doug suggests that a small working group of members of the EDC, HDC and Design Review Board meet to discuss possible bylaw revisions and also develop an educational program to deal with signage and zoning.

It was agreed that sign enforcement in West Acton should continue with EDC and HDC cooperation, but no further major action be taken in West Acton re signage issues until EDC & HDC & DRB sub-group meets and agrees on next steps – especially with the holiday period coming soon and a wish to not impede the business effort.

As part of the SIGNAGE discussion, as it relates to the overall needs of the Planning Department, the Planning Department staffing issues and challenges was also discussed.

Roland described the Planning Department's staff demands required to support many town boards and committees – as well as town staff.

The question was raised about should the EDC move to a 1 night a month meeting schedule rather than the current 2 nights a month. Doug asked all members for their views. The vote was 5 members prefer 2 meetings and 3 members prefer 1 meeting. It was strongly stressed by several members, however, that the meetings could be much more structured and much more time sensitive.

It was agreed that – if required --- members could take on more clerical duties such as preparing and posting the agenda, preparing materials for each meeting, taking and posting the minutes.

MEETING ADJOURNED --- 9:55 p.m.