



Economic Development Committee Minutes

3 June 2021

7:00 pm

Zoom Webinar

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 6/3/21, held remotely at 7 pm

Called to Order: 7:06 pm

Members Present: Mike Majors, Ann Chang, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah, Catherine Usoff, David Cote, Derrick Chin, David Didriksen, Jon Benson

Staff Present: Selby, Director of Economic Development and Land Use

Members Absent: Dan Malloy, Peter Daniel, Shirley Ming

Preliminaries

Call the Roll

Preamble (Larry Kenah)

I. Regular Business

1. Review of meeting minutes from previous meetings

- The minutes of June 3, 2021, were approved unanimously with minor corrections, 8-0.

2. Public participation

- There is minimal participation, seeking to participate later in the meeting.

II. New/Special Business

3. EDC position on Drive-up Window Zoning

- West Acton Village Merchants Association (WAVMA)

Invited guests from this group, including Ruth Thatcher, Annette Lochrie, and Terra Friedrichs, state their opposition to the proposed article. Their position is that allowing drive-up windows will help chains and large businesses at the expense of struggling local businesses, which would not be able to install their own drive-up windows based on configuration and zoning restrictions. Annette raises the issue of fairness in competing with other areas that have the infrastructure to support drive-up windows, whereas West Acton can only do curbside service.

Josh Fischel asks how WAVMA arrived at their position; it was an opt-out survey.

David asks whether help with defraying costs for small businesses [to install drive-up windows?] would change WAVMA's position. (It would not.)

Chris Hardy chimes in to ask if there are other existing businesses besides CVS that would be applying for a drive-thru. Derrick Chin says the McDonald's on Great Road would probably be interested. Chris names Dunkin Donuts by Route 2 and worries

about congestion. Larry Kenah responds that every drive-thru proposal would require a special permit.

- EDC final vote on article

Larry goes down the list— Ann: opposed, Catherine: supports, David D.: opposed, David C.: supports, Derrick: supports (and reports that the Planning Board is supportive with one dissenting vote about pharmacies), Josh: supports, Mike: supports, Larry: supports

We decide to recommend the article, 6-2.

4. EDC position on Fossil Fuels and New Construction

- Discussion on article

David D. kicks off the conversation. He is no fan of coercion or the Northeast electric grid. Josh says that he is. Catherine indicates her opposition. Mike says no to this, too. David C.: opposes. Ann: conflicted and undecided. Derrick: opposed but concerned about the environment. Larry: opposed as written. Jon Benson reports that the Select Board voted to recommend the article, 4-0 with one abstention. Terra Friedrichs calls to say that the state will never act without municipal leadership. Mike points out that there would likely be additional construction costs associated with this—re-positioning houses, adding insulation, etc.

- EDC final vote on article

Ann: abstain, Catherine and David D.: recommend against, David C.: abstain, Derrick: abstain, Mike & Larry: recommend against, Josh: recommend for
We then discuss how to share the division within the committee; Josh volunteers to start a draft that we'll share and have ready for approval at our next meeting.

5. Updates from working groups

Re: the Local Rapid Recovery Program—Selby reports that there will be a public workshop at 7 pm on 6/16.

III. More Regular Business

6. Updates from members

There are none.

7. Update from Director of Economic Development

Selby says we are allowed to continue with remote meetings until September, and then legislation might prolong that.

8. Next meetings

- 17 June 2021 (last meeting before town meeting)
- 5 August 2021

Committee adjourns at 8:49 pm.

IV. Consent Items

9. None

Additional materials

- Draft meeting minutes from 6 May 2021
- FAQ from Jim Snyder-Grant

The listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

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For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to
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