

Acton 2020



PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, March 3, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Acton Town Hall – Room 204

Purpose:

To hold a public workshop with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of economic development by inviting “experts” and the public to discuss some of the key issues important to Acton’s future. Also to further understand the variety of viewpoints and people’s concerns regarding this issue.

AGENDA

- 7:00 – 7:30 Welcome and Introduction (including powerpoint presentation)
- 7:30 – 8:30 Discussion of hypothetical scenario
- 8:30 – 9:15 Small Group Discussions including mapping and prioritization exercises
- 9:15 – 9:30 Reconvene as Large Group
Next Steps

This public workshop is part of a three-part series.

If you are unable to attend the other two, please let us know if you have any “burning thoughts” regarding the other “burning issues.”

How can we love cars and hate traffic?: Getting around Acton

Wednesday, March 9th/ 7:00-9:30pm/ Acton Town Hall

“I got stuck in traffic.” We all hear it, perhaps with increasing frequency. Acton has several key traffic pinch points that cause frustration for all. What can the town do to help alleviate car congestion? And what about those who are unable to drive? Are Actonians willing to use more public transportation if it were offered? Are there enough people

clustered in the right places to make a public transportation system viable? Will investment in bike paths and sidewalks help alleviate traffic? Or are the costs of such undertakings really worth the benefit? Come help us evaluate how we can get around town better.

Your Comments:

Where, how much, what kind, for whom?: Housing in Acton

Saturday, March 12th/ 2:00-4:30pm/ Acton Town Hall

Every new housing development built in Acton seems to generate discussion. Some people feel that we need more housing of a certain type, e.g., affordable housing, 55+ communities, more dense housing, less dense housing. Others are of the opinion that any more housing will overtax town resources - especially the schools and water &

sewer systems - and will cause more traffic. Many residents express concern that additional development has potential negative impacts on our town character (e.g., that it will gobble up open space or that it will not be designed to fit in with Acton’s historic character). Help us think through what the right balance is for Acton.

Your Comments:

Other Burning Issues?

Are there any other “burning issues” you feel are important to address in Acton’s future?

Your Comments:

HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO

Spaulding and Not-so-shy (names changed to protect both the innocent and the guilty) have purchased a number of adjacent parcels in Acton that they were able to assemble into one large 200-acre lot. Some portions of this lot are wooded; some are open fields. There is an old barn in a highly visible location. They are proposing to develop it as an industrial park with some manufacturing and some research and development uses. This lot is located near an elementary school in a neighborhood where many of the children walk to school, but where not all the streets have sidewalks leading to the school.

VITAL STATISTICS: Hypothetical Industrial Park of 200 Acres	
Floor area of industrial buildings	1.5 million square feet
(Floor area ratio of .2: 35% set aside for open space)	Parking of 13 acres
Buildings value	\$255,000,000 @ \$170/sq. ft. construction cost
Land value	\$100,000,000 @ \$500,000/acre
Total taxable value	\$355,000,000
2011 tax rate	\$18.08
Annual tax yield	\$6,418,400
Water Use	120,000 gallons per day
Septic Disposal	100,000 gallons per day
Stormwater Disposal Requirements ¹	930,000 gallons (for every inch that falls)

PROJECTED HYPOTHETICAL IMPACTS

Fiscal impact: Amount reduction in residential property tax (average residential property) = 8.9% = \$805.

Environmental impact: Some encroachment on wetlands and the habitat of the blue-spotted salamander (rare species listed among those of special concern).

Traffic impact: It is estimated that the development will result in between 6,000 and 8,000 additional trips per day (5% of which are likely to be trucks). In initial discussions there was some mention of the fact that those employed in the research and development were on more flexible schedules, thus diffusing the peak traffic time.

Impact on town character: The proposal is not complete but the siting and design of the building seem not to have taken aesthetics into account. Additionally, there is no mention of using planting as a visual screen.

Impact on employment: Provision of a range of job opportunities for different skill levels

Spin off effect: This effect will most likely stimulate an increase in other types of economic development, such as restaurants, copy centers, etc.

¹ The storm water estimate is for the building(s) footprint only, and assumes a one story building(s), permeable surfaces for parking, roadways and land and streetscaping. In all likelihood, 200 acres of industrial land would be subdivided into 5 parcels and 5 300,000 square foot buildings would be built with 5 separate parking areas and interior roadways, with 5 separate septic systems.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE (45 minutes)

Brief Introduction and description of small group exercises

You will be asked a couple of questions, next you will be invited to participate in a mapping exercise and finally you will be asked to prioritize action steps.

Questions

1. A. *Where do you work? (in town, out of town)*
B. *How many of you would like to work in Acton if you had the opportunity to do so?*
2. *Where do you shop and dine? (how often in Acton, how often out-of-town)?*

Mapping

3. *Where would the different kinds of economic development be best located?*

Think about the goods, services, and jobs you would prefer be located in Acton that you currently have to go out of town for (either they don't exist at all or there is not enough of)?

Restaurants/coffee shops/pub

Entertainment (movie theater, musical performance space)

Small shops

Big box

Personal services (e.g. dry cleaners, tailor)

Professional offices (e.g. doctor, dentist, lawyer)

Industrial/manufacturing

High tech/R&D

Other ___?

Prioritizing Action Steps

4. *If you could do one thing to address economic development issues in Acton, what would it be?*

PRIORITIZE WITH DOTS: After all participants have added their thoughts to the list, give each participant 5 dots. They may not use more than 3 on any one item.

NOTE: Be sure you have a copy of the ***Economic Development Highlights*** handout. It may have information useful to you in the discussion.