

Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2010

7:00 pm

Room 204

Acton Town Hall

Offered by Leigh Davis-Honn

Attending: Doug Tindal, Leigh Davis Honn, Nancy Dinkel, Ann Chang, Dick Calandrella, Chris Pappas, David Didricksen, Joe Ianelli

7:22 pm Meeting called to order

11/4 minutes to be sent – not yet received

7:25pm Discussion regarding Town response to Signage Review Panel memos (2)

Doug will follow up with a memo requesting a meeting w/Steve Ledoux and Roland Bartl. Doug will first email the memo to the EDC for review.

The committee feels a new 'start-up' date should be established for the signage review panel. Goal for Feb 1 feedback from Town staff.

Unfortunately, it doesn't appear sign enforcement has changed. An example is the Stop N Shop exchange that they were cited for the re-grand opening banners on their light posts in the parking lot, again not handled with the requested level of diplomacy nor communication. Committee is adamant that town staff not harass retailers during the holiday season, especially in light of the economic hardships both businesses and consumers are facing.

Committee noted the Acton business ecosystem is fragile – with consideration for independent businesses vs big box retailers. Town staff is making it difficult for independent businesses to succeed. Must consider relationships/business environment. It is not being enhanced and makes it difficult to attract new businesses with Acton's current reputation.

8:10pm New Businesses – “Red, White & Brew” – West Acton

8:15pm Demographics – working with Acton 2020 committee member, Jim Snyder-Grant to pull business information, have list of 1700 businesses but contain duplicates that need to be culled.

- 8:20pm Marketing – would like to work with town staff to discuss opportunity for a town-wide business event calendar to be posted on www.acton-ma.gov site. Leigh made initial contact with Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce to discuss concept of Acton’s Buy Local Campaign and marketing campaign opportunities.
- 8:30pm New & Existing Business Support –David will be following up with MWCoC after holidays to continue development.
- 8:40pm Path Forward – Nancy followed up with Phil Summers about EDC membership – potentially to chair the new business support working group.
- Next meeting – December 16. Who can make it? Nancy, Chris, Joe, Leigh, Doug..... Will be absent: Ann, David
- 8:45pm Meeting adjourned