



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 21, 2011, 7:30 PM, Room 204 – Acton Town Hall

Present: Dick Calandrella/Full Member, Ann Chang/At Large Member, Derrick Chin/Planning Board Rep, David Clough/Selectman, Leigh Davis-Honn/Guest, Nancy Dinkel/Chamber Rep, Mike Gowing /Chair of Selectmen & Guest, Jeff Hall/Full Member (BOS Approved/Needs to be Sworn-In), Harry Mink/Full Member/Clerk **Absent:** David Didriksen/Member at Large and Chris Pappas/Chamber Rep **Quorum:** Yes

EDC Meeting Called to Order: 7:32 PM by Dick C. who chaired the meeting this evening

- 1. Public Participation** – Leigh D-H. passed around an “Admission is Free” post card (@HighlandStreet.org) for various events through the summer with July 15th highlighting the Acton Discovery Museums. No other members of the general public were present so EDC moved onto the next item
- 2. Approval of Minutes** – the EDC Minutes for 11-4-10, 1-6-11, 3-10-11, 6-16-11, and 7-7-11 were sent out in advance for review and after a **Vote** were unanimously approved by the EDC members present with the exception of 11-4-10, 1-6-11, 3-10-11 where only Harry M. abstained since he wasn't present for these specific meetings. **Action Item:** Harry M. to forward the aforementioned approved EDC Minutes to clerk@acton-ma.gov
- 3. Welcome New Members** – Dick C. welcomed the new, renewed and promoted Members. **Action Item:** Jeff H. to get sworn in by Clerk's Office before 8-4-11, the next EDC Meeting.
- 4. Review of all Membership Status** – a discussion was held and the plan going forward with 11 slots is as follows: At Large Member – AnnChang, At Large Member – David Didriksen, Board of Selectman Rep – David Clough, Chamber Rep – Nancy Dinkel, Chamber Rep – Chris Pappas, Planning Board Rep – Derrick Chin, Full Member – Dick Calandrella, Full Member – Jeff Hall (approved by BOS, needs to be sworn-in by Clerk), Full Member - Harry Mink, Finance Committee Rep – to be appointed and Associate Member – to be appointed. Harry M. asked about the 7 + 2 slots listed in the 11-6-09 “Board/Committee Handbook” and was given the explanation that EDC Membership evolved over time. Dick C. gave Harry M. a copy of the EDC 2010-2011 Membership list with names, titles and contact information which Harry M. relayed to the entire EDC the next day.
- 5. Nomination & Election of Officers** – (This was done out-of-order as were other Agenda Items, but is listed here according to the published Agenda) Harry M. received a unanimous **Vote** for EDC Clerk; Dick C. received a unanimous **Vote** for EDC Vice-Chair and after some assurances that the Chair can and must delegate tasks and responsibilities, Nancy D. received a unanimous **Vote** for EDC Chair.
- 6. EDC Marketing Presentation by Leigh Davis-Honn** – Leigh D-H. passed out a copy of a Draft letter and a 40 question survey intended to be sent to all local businesses in Acton (E-mail and hard copy) which is ready to go after a current review for possible dated items that might need editing. **Action Item:** All EDC to review ahead of the next EDC meeting. Suggestion: add request for E-mail address to Survey. Leigh D-H. agreed to be a “friend” to the EDC with time on weekends, but she was tied up until the end of September 2011.
- 7. Update of 2011-2012 Goals** – Dick C. passed out a list of 8 proposed goals, all of which were discussed in the following order with key comments/action items: 1) “Complete & Present Business Demographics List” – it was agreed that if 80% complete, it would be presented/released as a “work-in-progress”, it was said that it would be a never-ending project that needed to be handed off to the IT Director in Town to maintain and publish monthly list updates on the Town Website going forward, it was agreed to gather business owner contact info not the owner of the Real Estate, point made was this data was needed in order to understand who we are today and then to monitor change going forward, Dick C. sent data he had gathered to Jeff H. to pull together. 2) “Complete & Send out EDC Marketing Survey” – this topic created a lot of conversation some of which follows:



work with Chamber in their effort to support local businesses in a “Buy Local” campaign, develop a 5,000 piece “Business Directory”, there is a EDC brochure on the Town Website, Leigh D-H. suggested developing a campaign calendar so that all key elements of a campaign from final review, PR, implementation via E-mail and Direct Mail, tabulating feedback, develop summary reports while keeping individual responses Confidential, Jeoff H. agreed to head up project and would work with Nancy D. to survey some 1,700 Acton businesses. 3) “Complete Set-up of Supporting Existing Businesses in Acton” – David D. had headed this up, but there isn’t a team operating and apparently isn’t currently functional 4) Attract New Business & Launch New Business Team” – after some discussion, most agreed this was very important, but other things needed to be addressed first 5) “Review Acton Sign Bylaw & Propose Possible Changes” after some discussion, was coupled with 6) “Recommend Streamlining Sign Enforcement Process” – much discussion and examples given of need to move on this topic (new Rt-2A signage offensive) before non-compliant sign damage gets totally out of control. 7) “Support Existing Businesses” and 8) “Review Current Commercial Permitting Processes” – depended upon new software system to be specified and RRQ’d by the BOS and implemented by/before 2014. **Vote** on top 3 EDC Committee Goals for 2011: [1] Review Acton Sign Bylaw & Propose Changes by Feb 2012 **Action Item:** Nancy D., Ann C. and Dick C. to own Goal [2] Create an Electronic Acton Business Directory by Dec 2011 **Action Item:** Jeoff H. to own Goal and [3] Complete, Review and Conduct EDC Marketing Survey by Fall 2011 **Action Item:** David D. and Chris P. to own Goal

8. **Update – EDC/HDC Sign Project** – Dick C. mentioned that the HDC is now focused on commercial signage in West Acton that it’s important for EDC to keep in touch with HDC signage and keeping the business friendly perspective within reasonable sign constraints. **Action Item:** Dick C., Nancy D. and Ann C. to attend the 8-23-11 HDC Meeting on behalf of the EDC.
9. **Discussion of Current Issues** – Dick C. said that the EDC Signage By-Law Subcommittee met last night with Ann C. focused on Window Signs, Dick C. on Sign Enforcement and Nancy D. on Temporary Signs & Special Event Signs especially making the By-Law language more understandable.
10. **Committee Reports**
 - + Demographics – Jeoff H. has data from Dick C. and will process in a timely manner
 - + Marketing – see #6 above, presentation of Business Survey by Leigh H-D.
 - + New Business – open; Chris P. absent, is going to bring in commercial stats when stable
11. **Next Regular Meetings** – Dick C. provided a list: 8-4-11, 8-18-11, 9-1-11, 9-15-11, 10-6-11, 10-20-11, 11-3-11, 11-17-11, 12-1-11 and 12-15-11 **Action Item:** All EDC to put dates in their calendars.
12. **Adjourn** – The EDC Meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM

Next Regular Meeting (August 4, 2011)

Minutes respectfully submitted by: *Harry A. Mink*, Clerk of EDC