

OCT 6 2008

Minutes

Town of Acton Economic Development Committee (EDC) Acton Town Hall, Room 204 6-19-2008

Attending: Bill Lawrence, Lauren Rosenzweig, Terra Friedrichs, Doug Tindal, Vivek Kulkarni, Ann Chang
Also present: Kristin Alexander (Town Planning Department)

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM by Lauren Rosenzweig.

I. Introduction – Terra Friedrichs

Meeting attendees introduced themselves:

Ms. Rosenzweig is Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. This is her last meeting as the Selectmen's representative on the EDC. She has been a member of the EDC for many years. Edmund Starzec from the Planning Board was the Chairman of the EDC last year. He is moving out of town and will be missed. Last year, the EDC (1) successfully proposed a zoning change for the Light Industrial – 1 district after two businesses located on Main Street near Post Office Square approached the committee about what seemed to be reasonable tenant retention/business expansion concerns, (2) assisted a local farm owner in working through State and local Health Department issues, and (3) researched and recommended to the Selectmen to investigate joining the State's Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP).

Mr. Kulkarni is a Certified Public Accountant who has lived off and on in Acton for many years.

Mr. Tindal is the representative from the Finance Committee. He works in commercial real estate and has lived in Acton for ten years.

Ms. Friedrichs is a Selectman and will replace Ms. Rosenzweig on the EDC. She has a finance/project management background mainly in high-tech. She has done a lot of civic work and disaster relief work. She would like to see the EDC do more promotion for businesses in Acton and an economic summit (Lowell did one). Ms. Rosenzweig added she hopes the EDC can help improve the relationships between the Town and businesses.

Ms. Alexander has been the Assistant Town Planner for Acton since 2000. Prior to Acton, she has worked as a planner for Loudoun County, VA and the Town of Hilton Head Island, SC. She is originally from Plymouth, MA.

Mr. Lawrence is one of the Chamber of Commerce Representatives on the EDC. He is a real estate owner. He used to own Acton/Concord Industrial Park, but now he is a tenant there. He joined the EDC several years ago because he believes in uniform tax rates. The old Master Plan was unfavorable to business; the Master Plan Update was much more favorable to business. The EDC has been an advocate for new and existing businesses. Uniform tax rates and sewers are friendly to business.

Ms. Chang was an EDC member for many years, "sunsetting", and now is back. She is very involved with the Acton Memorial Library. She originally joined the EDC as a member of the Sewer Action Committee. Sewers are an integral part of business development. She is hoping the EDC will help with the West Acton sewer initiative.

II. Oversight Meeting/BOS

Staff will develop a summary of the EDC's work over the last year for EDC members attending the Oversight Meeting.

The Town Economic Development Industrial Incorporation (EDIC) has been inactive. It needs start up money. Other Town's have EDICs or similar groups – maybe Acton can look at them for ideas.

Mr. Lawrence will be at the Oversight Meeting with the Selectmen.

Ms. Chang will try to be at the Oversight Meeting.

Other - Members agreed to put sewers on the next EDC agenda for discussion.

III. Membership

The EDC still needs one more member. The vacancy is an At-large, Associate position.

IV. Comprehensive Community Plan Outreach Update

Ms. Alexander stated that resident and business mail surveys, phone surveys, community group meetings, and two town-wide visioning sessions had been conducted to seek a broad range of community input. Currently, Town board/committee meetings were being held and more community group meetings. The results were being compiled. A draft report summarizing the process should be available soon.

Mr. Lawrence didn't receive the business survey and he has an Acton address.

Ms. Friedrichs had heard that the Town's sign bylaw is a problem. EDC members agreed that the sign bylaw probably needs to be reviewed.

Ms. Rosenzweig will be attending the 6/28/08 Town board/committee outreach meeting to represent the EDC.

V. Economic Target Area Education and Outreach

Staff will send the EDC a link to the State's website on Economic Target Area's and try to summarize the information.

VI. McDonald's/Kelley's Corner Discussion

The lease for the McDonald's in Kelley's Corner (Rt. 27/Rt. 111) has ended and the tenants did not renew. The tenants own the McDonald's in East Acton. It is unclear what the property owners will do with the building or if another tenant will move in.

VII. Other

Next Meeting – Decide on (1) Chairman and Vice Chairman, (2) Clerk or rotating a minutes taker each meeting.

Ms. Rosenzweig will contact Mr. Starzec and Mr. Francis to see if they can attend the Oversight Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.