



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 20, 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, Nancy Dinkel/Chamber Rep, Jeoff Hall/Full Member, Harry Mink/Full Member/Clerk and Doug Tindal/FinCom Rep & Acting FinCom Chairman **Absent:** David Didriksen/Member at Large and Chris Pappas/Chamber Rep
Quorum: Yes

Public/Visitors: AB students - Tyler Billings, Rachel Davidson and David Yao

EDC Meeting Called to Order: 7:32 PM by Nancy D. who chaired the meeting

1. **Public Participation** – Above listed AB students were invited by Dick C. to sit at the table with the EDC members; they were there to observe a local government committee for a Class (#2013) assignment; Nancy D., Dick C. and others explained that the basic function of the EDC was to help to make the town more business friendly, thus encouraging economic growth within the character of the Town; no specific questions were asked by the students, they just observed the EDC proceedings from start to finish.
2. **Approval of Minutes** –Nancy D. asked about the amended Minutes of 10-06-11 and after a **Vote** these were unanimously approved by the EDC members present. **Action Item:** **Harry M.** to forward the aforementioned Approved EDC Minutes to clerk@acton-ma.gov
3. **Finalize EDC Report for Town's Annual Report** – Nancy D. asked Harry M. to pass out copies of the 2010 EDC Annual Report; members were asked to read the report, make notes and be prepared to discuss at an upcoming meeting. **Action Item:** **Nancy D.** to write a Draft 2011 EDC Annual Report and circulate to members for their review and feedback. Ann C. said that the report is due by/before the end of December 2010.
4. **Planning Board input re Zoning Bylaws/EDC's suggestions to change** – Nancy D. said that Roland Bartl/Town Planning Director is looking for EDC input by/before the end of this year on Sign Law regulation changes for the upcoming Town Meeting; it was suggested we pick the top 3; language changes might include the phrase "up to \$300/day" vs. "\$300/day" for fines related to sign law violations; a discussion ensued about following David D's suggestion that the Planning Dept. focus initially on just temporary signs vs. the entire set of sign law regulations and Dick C. countered with the suggestion that EDC continue to support the 3-step plan currently in place (1. Informational Meetings [recently held in W. Acton] 2. Visits to discuss infractions 3. Enforcement if needed) and being implemented by the Planning Dept. Other discussion points made: grandfathered signs on Rt2-A pass from owner to owner; HDC has different sign standards than the town which is difficult for businesses Ex: HDC allows no window signs vs. Town's 25% of window area allowable for signs; Town has two different Dept's dealing with signs (Planning & Building) and that function should be combined into a single Dept.; other solutions should be considered by and proposed by the EDC vs. Acton 2020 people talking about adding staff "Economic Development Officer"; Town Commons are sacred grounds and no signs should ever be permitted; 501 3C go softer?and in summary: **Action Item:** **Nancy D.** to talk (very quickly) to Roland B. (he will be gone for 3-weeks in Germany) about sign issues and **Action Item:** **Dick C., Ann C. and Nancy D.** /EDC's Sign Sub-Committee to meet to summarize core sign issue recommendations and feed back to EDC.



5. Review of Common Victualer License payment process – Nancy D. brought up David D's. issue of Town treating business more abruptly than residents (no warnings); David C. checked and was told there was a warning process in place (1. phone call 2. friendly letter 3. stern letter), also was told that out of approx. 100 such victualer licenses in Acton, only 10 or so are repeat offenders ; Geoff H. suggested E-mails could/should be used for this and other notifications to businesses once we have the data base built; Doug T. said that EDC should find out what licenses are needed when and added to an Acton Town Calendar that would be a key to notifications and events and that this should be recommended to the ALC (Acton Leadership Committee)
6. Review of Site Permit Process – David C. said that the town is looking at software packages (Accela, + others) to automate the process, but first start by charting the process currently in place and then streamline ahead of any implementation in software; Ann C. suggested that other Departments have slots like the Building Dept.; the different Depts have to talk to one another and agree on a better process than the one currently in place (David C. gave an example of the hoops he had to go through when applying for a porch or deck addition to his home); David C. suggested that EDC needs to state to the Town that businesses need this streamlined process NOW to help make Acton more business (and resident) friendly.
7. Updates on Sign Bylaw Goal – Nancy D. suggested we skip this topic for another time
8. Update on Electronic Business Directory – Nancy D. suggested we skip this topic for the time being
9. Update on Marketing Survey – Doug T. suggested that EDC recruit another marketing resources other than Leigh Davis-Honn as she is being tied up with work on other projects. **Action Item:** Nancy D. to invite Leigh to our next EDC meeting
10. Upcoming Scheduled Meetings – 7:30 PM in Room 204, Acton Town Hall: 11-17-11, 12-1-11 and 12-15-11; however, on 11-3-11 EDC will move to Room 126, Acton Town Hall. Nancy D. about the EDC 11-3-11 meeting being replaced by attendance at the mandatory Ethics Training being held that same evening, but the consensus was that EDC should keep their meeting and the new members consider attending the 4:00 PM session. **Action Item:** Harry M. volunteered to attend the 4 PM Ethics Training on 11-3-11 and report highlights to the 7:30 PM EDC Meeting later that evening.

Adjourn – The EDC Meeting was adjourned at/around 8:58 PM.

Next Regular EDC Meeting (7:30 PM, November 3, 2011 in Room 126 Town Hall)

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