

EDC Minutes – 6 December 2012

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 15 November 2012 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Ann Chang, Chris Pappas, Dave Clough, David Didriksen, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel,

Missing: Allan Gulliver, Derrick Chin, Jeoff Hall

Acton 2020

The primary purpose of the meeting was to interact with members of Acton 2020. As a result, there were several visitors.

- Acton 2020
 - Margaret Woolley Busse, Acton 2020 Chair
 - Celia Kent, Acton 2020 Member
 - Michael Shailer, Acton 2020 Member
 - John Sonner, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Acton 2020
- Planning Department
 - Roland Bartl, Planning Director
 - Kristen Guichard, Planning Assistant
- Visitor
 - Belle Choate
- There were no members of the public in attendance.
- The minutes from the 1 November 2012 meeting were approved.

Margaret Woolley Busse presented a set of slides called Acton 2020 Implementation Committee Phase III Update. The slides can be found at

<https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-5093>

Phase III represents the implementation stage. It is clear from the presentation that the initial focus of Acton 2020 is Kelley's Corner.

Here are some key points from the presentation and the discussion that followed.

- Dave Clough suggested that land control is one of the first things to do.
- Margaret indicated that Acton 2020 is looking at a MassWorks grant to fund the next set of studies.
- Nancy Dinkel asked about the impact on existing businesses in Kelley's Corner.
 - Why would business owners want to be involved.

- Dave Clough reported that the latest CVS plan was approved by the Design Review Board.
 - No parking in front (on Route 111 side)
 - The front door, a loading dock, and a dumpster are all located at the rear (away from Route 111).
- Ann Chang pointed out that people have addressed improvements to Kelley's Corner before. Can any of the results from these earlier iterations be used this time around?
 - Roland Bartl indicated probably not in that the most recent efforts are at least ten years old.
- Several people indicated that earlier efforts were not successful in conveying the vision for an improved Kelley's Corner. New technologies make it much easier to show the effect of some of the proposed changes.
- Dave Didriksen offered several observations and some advice.
 - Do not confuse traffic and congestion. Congestion is bad but, from a retailer's perspective, traffic is good.
 - Acton 2020 should involve the business community as early as possible.
 - Will they invest?
 - Will they rent?
 - It is difficult to create a completed vision all at once. Look to an incremental approach.
- Roland Bartl agreed with the incremental approach but with the end goal in mind all along the way.
- Doug Tindal also offered some perspective and raised some questions.
 - The town controls neither the land nor the money.
 - There is no business plan.
 - Should Kelley's Corner be the lead for Acton 2020?
 - There should be some real estate developers or equivalent involved.
 - What would developers need to be successful?
 - Such questions should guide some of the plans.
 - The town should consider paying for some external unbiased advice.
- Roland indicated that they are trying to get business leaders to participate in Acton 2020.

At the end of the discussion, Margaret indicated that she will take the suggestions, especially Dave's and Doug's detailed lists, back to Acton 2020.

The conversation ended with insights from Dave Clough and Doug Tindal that this will be a tough budget year. The Acton 2020 conversation ended at 9:10

EDC Meeting

- The minutes from the 15 November 2012 were approved.

Sweet Bites

There was a brief conversation about the West Acton successor to Sweet Bites, called Spruce Street Café. Derrick Chin is driving the EDC involvement and he was not at this meeting so further discussion was postponed.

Future Meeting Topics

- CVS Update
- Drive through at banks and other businesses

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

The regular meeting schedule, first and third Thursday, will resume in January 2013.