

EDC Minutes – 2 May 2013

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 2 May 2013 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Chris Pappas, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Missing: Dave Clough, David Didriksen

We were joined by Marion Maxwell who has been active in the town before and is now attending meetings of several committees to “get the big picture” (her words).

Minutes from the meetings of 4 April 2013 and 18 April 2013 were approved.

Summary

Most of the meeting was spent on a long conversation about the current and future state of Acton and how these affect economic development. While the committee did not create specific goals as a result of the conversation, it provided the context for any future discussions of goals for the committee.

Panera Bread

We received a quick update on Panera Bread who plans to build a restaurant at the location in front of K-Mart formerly occupied by McDonald’s.

- The Design Review Board is OK with a one-story building.
- The Board of Selectmen raised two issues.
 - There is too much flat roof.
 - The outside patio is too close to the outside boundaries.

Conversation about Acton

This conversation started with an update on Kelley’s Corner but branched into several related areas with much information provided by Doug Tindal.

Kelley’s Corner

- Kelley’s Corner consists of (at least) four parts that are only connected by proximity. In addition to the businesses located at the immediate intersection, it also includes
 - Roche Brothers Plaza
 - Mall on Main Street with Acton Wine and Spirit, Not Your Average Joe’s, etc
 - Acton Medical

- South Side of Massachusetts Avenue
- The state funds that Acton is applying for consist of three buckets.
 - About half of the funds are directed at small towns.
 - Another quarter goes to so-called gateway cities.
 - Acton is competing with other cities and towns for a part of the remaining one fourth of the overall funds.
 - In this context, we learned that Acton ranks 27th in wealth of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Other Areas of Interest

- North Acton is booming.
- The Grace property in South Acton is ideal for a very small set of prospective businesses.
- The Nagog office Park in North Acton is a good barometer of the business climate in Acton.

Areas of Focus for EDC

In addition to looking at existing businesses (via the electronic business database), the EDC should also look at economically developable property. To this end, Derrick Chin and Larry Kenah agreed to visit The Paper Store headquarters at 20 Main Street. A day care center is applying for a permit there. (The report from Derrick and Larry will be included in the minutes from the 16 May 2013 meeting.)

Items of Interest

- Nearly one third of the approximately 7,200 housing units in Acton are apartments.
- Some planning scenarios have the total number of housing units growing dramatically.

Update from Planning Board

Derrick Chin reported that Pegasus Tack shop wants to put up a large (ten-foot) sign. This raised two questions.

- Did Pegasus go to the zoning department first?
- Why would they go to the Planning Board at all?

Other Items

There is nothing to add on HDC sign bylaws.

Larry Kenah will provide initial information on the Electronic Business Directory at the next meeting.

In Closing

Marion Maxwell (our lone visitor) indicated that she found the meeting useful and educational.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk.