

# EDC Minutes – 5 February 2015

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. This meeting took place on 5 February 2015 in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) of the Acton Public Safety Facility (PSF).

The meeting was called to order at 7:42 pm by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Bharat Shah, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Doug Tindal, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not Present: Ann Chang, Dick Calandrella, Franny Osman

Once again, Josh Fischel joined our meeting. He is looking to join one of the town committees and is visiting several as an observer.

## Meeting Summary

### Meeting Minutes (2)

Minutes from the EDC meeting held on 15 January 2015 were approved.

### Board of Selectmen Report (3)

Franny Osman was at a BoS meeting and was unable to join us.

Doug Tindal arrived after attending the beginning of that same BoS meeting and gave a brief report. In an earlier draft budget, the town manager had proposed two new positions: an economic development (ED) and a Land Use (LU) expert. In order to reduce the overall town budget, these two positions were merged into a single position with both ED and LU responsibilities. Some existing departments would report to this person.

These positions are tied to a proposed meals tax in the following way. If the proposed meals tax is not approved, it is likely that this new position would be withdrawn.

### KCSC Update

The Kelley's Corner Steering Committee met on 28 January 2015. These notes provide a brief update (not official minutes) from that meeting.

There were two parts to this meeting.

- Pro Forma Discussion
- Draft Zoning Recommendations

The documents that support these two discussions can be found at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6680>

## Updates

The right-of-way survey has been completed. The results are being examined before they are released.

## Pro Forma Discussion

In a nutshell, the pro forma discussion examines whether various scenarios make sense from a dollar perspective.

This set of slides and accompanying financial analysis looked at three types of development (retail, mixed-use retail and residential, and commercial office space) on five different parcels in Kelley's Corner to determine what approaches would be attractive to potential developers. Only one approach, mixed-use retail and residential, produced a net positive result.

One conclusion was that the inclusion of residential properties in the mix made this approach economically feasible. This led to a recommendation for a zoning change. Today, residential properties are not allowed under the Kelley's Corner district. This restriction should be lifted to allow mixed-use residential and retail.

## Draft Zoning Recommendations

Here are some key points that emerged from the zoning conversation.

- Floor area ratio (FAR) should be increased from 0.4 (realistic for commercial development) to 0.65 (better for mixed use).
- Zoning should be changed to allow mixed-use residential and retail.
- The Kelley's Corner District should include a Master Plan Development Overlay Zoning District.

A key question that must be answered in the remaining months of this project is how we can make the master plan attractive to a developer.

## Calendar

The next KCSC meeting will be moved to the fourth Thursday of February, 25 February 2015.

## Other Issues

At the end of this brief summary, someone asked whether KCSC had included any discussion of sewers in its examination of proposed development for Kelley's Corner.

The concern for EDC is that there is a finite reserve in the existing waste disposal plant and any additional connections to the existing sewer lines (such as additional residential presence in or near Kelley's Corner) would reduce the capacity available to West Acton Village should the existing sewer lines be extended to West Acton.

## **Mission and Goals and Objectives (5)**

Our original intention was to discuss the results from the subcommittee assigned to the second goal but there was some confusion about whether committee members had the latest results from that team.

We did spend a little time discussing whether the proposed ED position has an effect on our current efforts. We agreed that the landscape will obviously change when a person is hired into the ED/LU position but that we should continue with our efforts to provide this person with background and context for the current state of economic development in the Town of Acton.

## **Historic District Commission Sign Bylaw (7)**

David Foley, a member of both EDC and the Historical District Commission asked about HDC and signs. There are big differences in both policy and mechanism between sign regulations in historic districts compared with regulations that apply to the entire town. These differences make it difficult for businesses in historic districts.

The EDC has attempted for several years to bring the regulations closer together but has had little success in this regard.

## **Remaining Agenda Items (6, 8, 9)**

There were no updates on agenda items 6, 8, or 9. Work on these projects will be clarified after we go through the detailed discussion of EDC mission, goals, and projects.

## **Upcoming Meetings (10)**

We agreed to hold a special EDC meeting the following Thursday (12 February 2015) to examine the results from the team assigned to the second EDC goal and to otherwise make progress.

## **In Closing**

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk