

EDC Minutes – 21 May 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 21 May 2015 at the Acton Town Hall in Room 204.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Bharat Shah, Chingsung Chang, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Larry Kenah,

Not present: Doug Tindal, Josh Fischel, Nancy Dinkel

Chingsung Chang joined us for his first EDC meeting. He is our new member from the Board of Selectmen. Franny Osman has moved on to other committee assignments. We thank her for her contributions this past year.

Summary

Most of the meeting was spent discussing the proposed job description for the Land Use and Economic Development Director.

Public Participation (1)

Larry Kenah mentioned that the three business condominiums on Spruce Street in West Acton are now all occupied.

Meeting Minutes (2)

The minutes from the EDC meeting on 16 April 2015 were approved.

Introductions and Board of Selectmen Report (3)

This was Chingsung Chang's first meeting with the EDC. He introduced himself. We then went around the room and each member gave a brief background with emphasis on the EDC. The most recent BoS meeting focused on the job description, discussed in the next section.

Job Description for Land Use and Economic Development Director (4)

Background

There were four bits of context that introduced the discussion.

- Allan Gulliver, Derrick Chin, and Larry Kenah met with Steve Ledoux and Marianne Fleckner (Director of Human Resources, Town of Acton) on 30 April to talk about the position. The job description was mailed out just before the meeting started.
- Andy Brockway invited members of several committees to the 13 May Acton 2020 meeting to talk about the job description. Three EDC members (Ann Chang, David Foley, and Larry Kenah) attended that meeting.
- The job description was discussed at the 18 May BoS meeting.

Discussion

The general consensus was that there was practically nothing in the job description that addressed economic development. The position seemed heavily weighted toward a Land Use director. (In the meeting with Steve Ledoux and Marianne Fleckner, Steve had indicated that he saw roughly a 60 to 40 split between Economic Development and Land Use.)

People also expressed concerns that the position seemed heavily weighted toward management and administrative responsibilities. A person successful in that part of the role would have little time to focus on Economic Development activities.

Conclusions

The committee does not support the job as described in the current iteration of the job description.

The committee voted unanimously for a revised job description and a second public hearing on the job description. The EDC would send a note to members of the Board of Selectmen with this request. There were two key areas where changes were requested.

- The education requirements, skills, and previous experience needed to reflect economic development.
- The job description needed measurable goals and measurable outcomes so that the town and prospective candidates could assess suitability for the role.

Larry Kenah volunteered to write the request. Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, and Bharat Shah agreed to join the subcommittee that would help Larry with this request.

The following text is taken from the note that was sent from the EDC to the BoS.

We cannot support the job description in its current form. We are requesting that the Board of Selectmen revise the job description to reflect greater economic development skills and experience and then hold a second hearing.

We would like to see more emphasis on economic development in the background and experience.

- A candidate for this role should have previous experience in economic development.
- The educational background should include a wider selection of fields of study including economics or business.
- The certification recommendation should be removed.
- Communication between the ED Director and committees such as the EDC should be described.

More importantly, the job description should include measurable goals and outcomes that will allow both the town and prospective candidates to determine their suitability for the role and will provide success criteria for the person eventually selected for this role.

At the same time that this note was being drafted, Dick Calandrella would notify other boards and committees (2020, alg, drb, edc, fincom, hdc, lsc, osc, office, bas, edic, pb, sidewalk, tac, wrac) about the EDC position.

Acton 2020 Update (5)

Larry Kenah gave an update on recent activity by the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee. He reported on two meetings.

- Regularly scheduled KCSC meeting on 22 April 2015
- Public Workshop on 7 May 2015

Larry was unable to attend the 7 May public workshop but several other EDC members did attend. A summary of Larry's report is attached to these minutes.

Mission and Goals and Objectives (6)

Larry Kenah sent a shortened version of the Mission, Goals, etc document to the committee members on 21 April 2015. Allan Gulliver responded with some suggested changes but there was no other feedback. Dick Calandrella asked Larry to send the revised document one more time to EDC members with a request for comments.

We did not discuss any other aspects of this agenda item at this meeting.

Rest of Agenda (7..10)

Larry Kenah suggested that these agenda items be moved to a separate section of the agenda. We have not discussed them for some time and will make changes to this part of the agenda as part of the Mission, Goals, and Objectives effort.

Ann Chang recommended that we keep the item called HDC Sign Bylaw progress as an active agenda item. The HDC will be proposing changes to its sign bylaws. Ann asked that David Foley (a member of both EDC and HDC) let the EDC know in advance the dates for HDC meetings when the sign bylaws will be discussed.

Upcoming Meetings (11)

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

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

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee Update

The Kelley's Corner Steering Committee has only once since I last reported on KCSC to EDC. That meeting took place on 22 April, 2015.

A public workshop took place on 7 May 2015.

These notes will briefly summarize these meetings.

22 April KCSC Meeting

Meeting Summary

We spent most of the meeting discussing Draft Design Guidelines and the relations between design guidelines and zoning regulations.

Documents that support these topics can be found at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6802>

for the 22 April meeting and also at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6760>

for the 9 April meeting.

Design Guidelines

We started with a brief discussion about the differences between design guidelines and zoning regulations. At the simplest level, zoning regulations are hard and fast rules while design guidelines provide flexibility. The flexibility exists for both prospective developers and for the town itself. Guidelines are relatively easy to change. Zoning changes must be brought to town meeting.

7 May 2015

The public workshop was held on Thursday, 7 May 2015, at the Acton Town Hall. I myself did not attend the meeting.

Apparently, the meeting went well. The infrastructure improvements were well received by the approximately 45 people who attended.

Calendar

The next KCSC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 10 June 2015.

There will likely be one more public meeting in the fall before special town meeting.