

EDC Minutes – 18 June 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 18 June 2015 at the Acton Town Hall in Room 204.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah

Not present: Bharat Shah, Chingsung Chang, Nancy Dinkel

Summary

Public Participation (1)

There was no public participation.

Meeting Minutes (2)

The minutes from the EDC meeting on 4 June 2015 were approved.

Board of Selectmen Report (3)

Chingsung Chang was not at the meeting so there was no BoS update. We used this agenda item for some final comments about the job description for the combined position of Economic Development and Land Use Director.

- A revised job description was created. Some but not all of our requests for changes were adopted.
- Despite our request for a second hearing about the revised job description, the BoS and the town manager wanted to proceed quickly on posting the job description so that the position could be filled in a timely fashion.
- We agreed that, whatever the title, the role is that of an assistant town manager.

Acton 2020 Update (4)

Larry Kenah gave a verbal report on the most recent meeting of the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee that took place the previous morning (17 June 2015).

- A final report is being prepared by The Cecil Group.
- The committee is working on messages that will summarize the report.
- Committee members will be assigned deliver these messages to various stakeholders and other interested parties after the report is completed but before it is presented at a public meeting on 21 September 2015.

Ann Chang noted that one significant component of the proposed zoning changes is that the Planning Board would assume review responsibility. The Planning Board is short several members. One thought is

that, unlike several related town committees, it has no responsibilities. This review responsibility is one response to that absence.

Doug Tindal offered some thoughts on Kelley's Corner relative to the rest of the Town of Acton. He noted that there are zoning problems in all of the villages, not just Kelley's Corner. For various reasons, these areas need as much attention as Kelley's Corner.

Mission and Goals and Objectives (5)

We started with a brief conversation that circumstances have changed since we began this effort. In particular, the town is in the middle of hiring a person to fill a role that is partly dedicated to economic development. Our response should change as well.

We settled on the following steps.

1. We will first describe to Steve Ledoux what we have been doing these past several months. We will describe how we are "eager to work with" the Economic Development Director when that person is hired. (When Allan Gulliver, Derrick Chin, and Larry Kenah met with Steve Ledoux earlier this year, we already made this point.)
2. We will then meet with the newly hired ED Director.
3. Finally, we will meet with the BoS.

In an effort to complete the Mission and Goals document, we agreed on the following deadlines.

- **2 July** – Last chance for committee members to make comments on document
- **16 July** – Final version of document delivered to committee members with comments included
 - Editorial comment can still be made after this date but content is effectively frozen.
 - This document is suitable for delivery to Steve Ledoux, the ED Director, and the BoS.
- **6 August** – At the first meeting in August, we will develop messages that we will deliver to Steve Ledoux, the ED Director, and the BoS. While these messages are based on the document, they will be expressed in a very different format with different emphasis.

Town Businesses Database Update (6)

Ann Chang mentioned a previous effort that she was involved with that focused on the most important businesses to include in the database. She suggested that we "start with the stores". After a brief discussion, we named a subcommittee to pursue this effort.

- David Foley (focus on West Acton)
- Doug Tindal
- Josh Fischel

Ann Chang will deliver the list that was created during her earlier pursuit of such a database.

Historic District Commission Sign Bylaw Progress (7)

David Foley reported that there is not yet "work product" related to sign bylaws. The HDC intends to have something for Fall Town Meeting (10 November 2015).

There was a brief discussion about signs in West Acton with differing opinions on the economic impact of existing bylaws.

- There is a constraint that all signs must be made of wood, not a wood substitute.
- There is a “plethora” of neon signs in West Acton.
- Are existing bylaws anti-business or at least not business friendly?

Rest of Agenda (8 and 9)

There was no action on either of these items. Once we complete the mission and goals exercise, we will figure out what to do with these agenda items.

Upcoming Meetings (10)

We agreed to send our availability to Dick Calandrella about whether we would be available for the next EDC meeting, scheduled for 2 July 2015, the start of a long weekend.

In Closing

Member Updates

Before we adjourned, Derrick Chin gave a brief update on Brookside Shops.

- The trees that were planted to add to the barrier between the shops and nearby homes may be dug up.
- Ann Chang requested that the zoning change appear on the warrant for Fall Town Meeting.

Derrick and Ann agreed to continue the discussion offline.

EDC Elections

Nancy Dinkel has requested that the committee find her successor. She noted that “just for a few months” has evolved into several years of her tenure as EDC chair.

Dick Calandrella observed that in the “natural order of things”, he would move from vice chair to chair but he is not certain that he can make the time commitment to the role due to possible medical issues.

We agreed to postpone any further action on EDC elections until the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

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