

EDC Minutes – 30 June 2016

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 30 June 2016 at the Acton Town Hall in Conference Room 204.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:35 by Doug Tindal.

Present: Ann Chang, Chingsung Chang, Dave Didriksen, Derrick Chin, Doug Tindal, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah

Not present: Allan Gulliver, David Foley

Town Staff

Dick Calandrella, our longtime colleague and friend, passed away on 20 June 2016. We extend condolences to Dick's wife and family and are grateful for his contributions and service to the EDC and to the Town of Acton over the years. We will miss him.

Bharat Shah has resigned from the EDC.

Meeting Summary

Public Participation (1)

There was no public participation.

Meeting Minutes (2)

Minutes from the EDC meeting of 19 May 2016 were approved with one clarification.

Walker Committee Representation

We had a brief conversation about the EDC representation on the so-called Walker Property Committee.

- Ann Chang is officially an at-large member of the committee.
- The Board of Selectmen would not let us select Chingsung Chang as the EDC rep to the committee.
- The EDC still has a slot to fill on this committee.

The general sense of the EDC (not formally decided) is that the town should sell this property to a commercial developer proposing a project that fits into the town's overall plans.

The discussion about this property indicated that other groups are proposing very different uses of the property including a community center, open space, and housing.

Update from Members (8)

Doug Tindal led an interesting discussion about the amount of free cash that the town currently has on its books, approximately \$10M, large by state standards, and the advantages and disadvantages, both fiscal and psychological, of so much free cash.

If the town wanted to reduce its free cash, what should it do with the excess? One suggestion is to return it to taxpayers as a one-time rebate.

Membership Issues (3)

We continued our discussion about the current makeup of the committee compared with the “official” description. Our current plan is to leave the membership as is and deal with the differences between “requirements” and reality after we have completed several projects.

Doug Tindal told us that Allan Gulliver has moved to Littleton and explored the possibility that Allan might take one of the Chamber slots on the EDC. (We learned after the meeting that this idea will not work.)

Subcommittee Business Plans (4)

Larry Kenah described his progress with the business inventory database on several fronts. Here are key points from three updates that Larry sent to the committee between the most recent EDC meeting on 19 May and this meeting.

Accomplishments

- Contact with neighboring towns via phone and email
 - I sent a note to the EDC about these conversations on 28 June 2016.
- Various writing
 - Draft presentation
 - Draft letter to Acton Police Department
 - Technical requirements
 - Publicity plan
 - Research plan

Next Steps - Meetings

- Meet with Steve Ledoux and Mark Hald (13 July 2016)
- Visit Stow EDIC (14 July 2016)
- Arrange meeting date with BoS

Next Steps – Writing

- Draft presentation for Steve Ledoux, Stow EDIC, Board of Selectmen, etc
- Revised letter to businesses
- Draft instructions to volunteers

Advice from the EDC

In the discussion that followed Larry’s update, he got two important pieces of advice.

- In addition to reviewing our plans with Steve Ledoux and the Board of Selectmen, we should also make sure that Town Counsel takes a look at any formal communications such as the cover letter that will be carried by volunteers who visit businesses.
- We should stress that participation in this exercise is entirely voluntary. In fact, we should emphasize how participation benefits each business. (We need to answer the “What’s in this for me?” question.)

Buy Local (5)

Dave Didriksen has met with Selby about the Buy Local campaign. The conversation revolved around tying this campaign to the schools.

- The schools operate in their own universe.
- How can we tie Buy Local to the schools?
- It takes more than a bunch of posters to make a campaign like this successful.
- This campaign presents an opportunity to create a sense of community.
- What is the structure of Buy Local? How will it work?

In Closing

Upcoming Meetings

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for 21 July 2016.

Adjourn (8)

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

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