



Economic Development Committee Minutes

Jan 5 2024

12:00 PM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 1/5/24, held virtually via Zoom.

Called to Order: 12:05 pm

EDC Members Present: Catherine Usoff, Michael Carpenter, Patty Sutherland, Shirley Ming, David Cote, James Fuccione, Sharon Tchon Gruet

EDC Members Absent: Ann Chang, Dan Malloy

Also present: Julie Pierce, Fran Arsenault

Preliminaries

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I. Regular Business

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meeting Dec 1, 2023.
- Meeting minutes were approved by all members in attendance on the condition that the date related to Home Depot's transition away from selling gas leaf blowers is verified.

II. New Business

Welcome Planning Board liaison James Fuccione

EDC position on Gas Leaf Blower Ban

- EDC members agree that on principle, the town should incentivize vs. penalize businesses to achieve a transition from gas to electric. It is not the best use of town resources and creates a burden for businesses.
- The topic will likely be on the town meeting warrant this year.
- Catherine will draft an email position and present it at the select board meeting on Monday, January 8, 2024.

EDC position/view on Traffic Calming Plan (Sharon)

See [2019 - DRAFT - Traffic Calming Policy.pdf](#) (in the supporting documents folder of meeting agenda)

- Sharon commented that the 4-tier structure rating system should be revamped, the plan needs

to be proactive instead of reactive and account for recent development and construction. Local business should have more input into the plan, such as Acton Medical, and EDC should help provide consistent business voice. Members received the slides and traffic calming policy. The policy was described and differentiated. The area along route 27 was highlighted for particular future issues. Members were asked to drive listed problem areas.

- James F. commented that the complete street prioritization plan may be related. (<https://www.acton-ma.gov/582/Complete-Streets-Program> which includes a link to Acton Prioritization Plan)

III. Old Business

Fran will look into how to get the website updated for our meeting time and committee description. She will also look into elevating David Cote from associate to full member, and assigning the liaisons as associate members.

IV. Update from Economic Development Director - Julie Pierce

Economic Development Director Updates 010524.pdf

Projects and initiatives requiring active EDC member engagement

- Acton's Business Boost – help promote it across local businesses. There is discussion of multi language support. Currently there is no funding for the newsletter.
- 19-21 Maple Street lease proposal review – looking for volunteer for working group. Shirley, James, Dave, and Mike all offered to participate.
- Public art – Participative performance art grants – beginning of summer, Dave and Sharon offered to help Julie with evaluating proposals.

Other Economic Development – EDC Member Updates:

South Acton Village (SAV) Planning Advisory Group

- **SAV Planning Group update for EDC 1.5.24.pdf**

Mike/RH Adhesives update

- The recent Conservation Commission meeting did not go well and Mike will appear at another meeting to request an exception from the Commission.
- This has been a frustrating experience financially and emotionally for the business owner. The Conservation Commission allows for exceptions to be made but they appear to be reluctant to make any exceptions.
- Mike is looking for a letter from the EDC and in-person support, urging the Conservation Commission to consider the overall goal of improving the environment, rather than strictly adhering to static regulations. The property has been in industrial use since 1870.
- EDC has voted unanimously to provide the letter of support with Mike abstaining. Catherine will draft the letter.

Other Topic:

If a business would like to have support, e.g. have letter of support from EDC, what is the process the EDC should adopt?

EDC has been supportive of any business that comes to the committee in the past and will add an agenda item for next meeting to discuss how to formalize the process.

Next Steps and Action Items

- Catherine will work with Dan to verify the Dec 1 meeting minutes accuracy around Home Depot plan for phasing out sales of gas leaf blowers.
- Catherine will draft the letter of support for RH Adhesive.
- Catherine will put the process discussion regarding business seeking support from EDC on the next meeting agenda.
- Fran to follow up on the EDC website changes and full member status for David Cote

The meeting adjourned at 1:21 pm.

For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to EDC@actonma.gov