



Economic Development Committee Minutes

Oct 11, 2024

12:15 PM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 10/11/24, held virtually via Zoom.

Called to Order: 12:15 pm

EDC Members Present: Patty Sutherland, Shirley Ming, Michael Carpenter, Sharon Tchon Gruet

EDC Members Absent: David Cote

Also present: Fran Arsenault, Select Board Liaison

Town Staff (Liaison for EDC): Maura Haberman

Preliminaries

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I. Regular Business

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meeting (August 9, 2024)
Approved unanimously
- Public participation
None.

II. New/Special Business

Requests for Future Guests

EDC members suggested to have the following as future guests. Maura to assist with coordination and scheduling.

- Town employees to discuss Sign Bylaw, which can provide more context for future discussions as this listed as a short-term goal from Select Board.
 - Patty commented that James Fuccione may be able to talk about it as he is the Planning Board liaison.
 - Fran mentioned that there was a listening session for the Sign Bylaw, but had no participant. Team discussed briefly on how to better publicize the event via social media and other channels to encourage participation when the event gets rescheduled.
- Town Manager & Select Board to discuss how EDC can more effectively advise Select Board.

- Historic District Commission (HDC) to discuss historic district rules and impact for development
- Volunteer Committee to talk about recruitment
- Water Resources Advisory Committee, Water Department & Board of Health to discuss how water and sewer advances or limitations affect business development and an update on WR grace with relation to discussions about business development.
- Community Preservation Committee

• **Maura shared that EDC liaison needed for Housing Production Plan**

- Working group formed in September, once a month via zoom.
- Patty volunteered; Maura to make connection

Updates on Economic Development Director hiring process

- 3 candidates as finalist and expected to hire before Thanksgiving,
- Patty will participate in interviewing the candidates.
- Sharon suggested to get job description and bio of the candidates .

III. Old Business

EDC Charge – liaisons and new members

Charge: 7 full members, up to 4 associate members, 3-year staggered term

The targeted recruitment efforts are

- Acton Business owner who may not reside in town
- Chamber of Commerce representative (Maura to follow-up)
- General Acton business community

As part of the recruitment effort, the suggestion is to have an Acton business owner who is not an Acton resident to join the committee, but not as majority of voting members

Agriculture committee has similar recruitment effort and clause written into its' charge that EDC is planning to reference when drafting a proposed revision to its' charge.

- Motion made and seconded to add allow non-Acton resident who are business owners in Acton to be member on the committee if they do not consist more than the majority of the committee.
 - The vote passed unanimously.

• **EDC's goals for FY25**

Get involved with the Sign Bylaw discussion. Sign Bylaws that, by their nature, unduly burden businesses, particularly sign bylaws

Vertical flags - some outreach is complete more is needed.

Important to have input from new EDD when hired.

• **Member Updates**

Michael Carpenter commented that the 2 years of permitting process for RH Adhesive has had a significant financial cost and energy for the business.

The positive news is that the business has gotten Mass manufacturing grant for manufacturing. The business has expanded from 5 to 9 employees in the last few years.

Sharon suggested that the grant application may worth looking into.

IV. Update from Economic Development Director – Maura, Interim Liaison

Ask for participation

- Restaurant week is Sunday Oct 20-27
 - o Multiple emails were been sent to Acton food establishments to participate. Advertising methods will be: street banner, signs, social media town twitter, Municipal Monthly and Town of Acton and Acton Recreation Facebook pages.
- Shop small Nov 30 Saturday, all through holiday season.
 - o Recommendations is to move up the date to Nov 23 if possible. Sharon alerted Maura to the fact a shortened retail season is very detrimental.

Event Representation & Promotion

- Stop and Shop opening this month at the old Kmart
- Acton Recreation Events: Monster Bash
- Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting events
 - o EDC members can attend for free as Town of Acton is a member

Support AB

- connect with intern and volunteer opportunity. Melissa Dempsey is the HS contact, Student Programs coordinator.

Other Economic Development – EDC Member Updates:

None.

Next Steps and Action Items

- Patty to draft the clause for EDC Charge and send to Fran for Select Board discussion.
- Finalize 2025 goals, and EDC role around Sign ByLaws.
- Next meeting on Nov 15, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

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