



Economic Development Committee Minutes

Nov 7, 2025

Meeting held via Zoom

10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Called to Order: 10:35 AM

Present: Patty Sutherland, Michael Carpenter, Shirley Ming, Robert Jackson, Sharon Tchon Gruet, Patricia Costa (Econ. Development Director), Fran Arsenault (SB Liaison),

Jason Cole (Fin Comm Liaison),

Absent: David Cote, Maura Haberman (ED Liaison), James Fuccione (Planning Board Liaison)

Also present: Gary Phillips (EDC Candidate), Sophia Darsch (Acton's Sustainability Office)

PRELIMINARIES

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I - REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Review of meeting minutes from October 10th, 2025
 - Minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved.
2. Public Concerns
3. Public Participation

II - NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

1. Update from the Office of Sustainability – Main Streets Program (Sophia Darsch)

A town-wide canvassing effort was conducted; ten businesses have signed up, though information sharing with the town has been limited.

This initiative represents a more targeted outreach effort focused on engaging small businesses.

Patty suggested that the ongoing matters involving leaf blowers be discussed first.

Leaf Blowers:

Robert has Contacted approximately 15 contractors, with a 50% response rate. He informed that battery-powered equipment costs estimated at \$10,000 or more and anticipated that costs may be passed on to customers. Small businesses may choose to prioritize work outside of town due to these costs. Sharon proposed a two-part survey targeting both business owners and homeowners to gather comprehensive feedback. Patricia asked if the survey could be incorporated into the ongoing initiative proposed by Mike Carpenter. Sharon agreed to share her draft survey with Patricia to determine whether the two efforts could be combined into a single survey.

Erik J. Heels provided Sharon with good survey guideline

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e88a19b3/GwM4PrCiEEWuWjsHGxA_Xq?u=https://www.giantpeople.com/17692.html

The group discussed whether to combine the survey with the economic development survey.

Update from the Office of Economic Development (Patricia)

2. Grant Awards and Applications

a. Vacant Storefront Program – Patricia

The application submitted by the Office of Economic Development was accepted. A total of \$50,000 in tax credits will benefit up to five businesses along a designated segment of Great Road, upon their commitment to host an art piece created by a local artist.

b. Employer Child Care Innovation Fund (ECCIF) – Mike / Patricia

The application was submitted through Exchange Hall, as funding must be provided via a nonprofit organization. It included a request for \$200,000 in grant funding, along with a \$200,000 matching contribution from the Anointed Worship Center, to support the establishment of a pilot child care program designed to provide hands-on learning experiences.

c. MAPC Technical Assistance Program – James / Patricia

The deadline to apply for this grant is December 8, 2025, and an application is expected to be submitted. Possible areas for technical assistance include traffic and mobility, façade improvements, service demand analysis, and mapping of historic sites.

d. Mass Development – Patricia

Patricia updated the group on ongoing conversations with MassDevelopment regarding the eligibility of the building located at Kelley's Corner under the Underutilized Property Program. She informed the group that the owner is open to renovating the building through this program to include affordable housing, a community center, and commercial space.

3. South Acton Working Group (James / Patricia)

Key stakeholders have been identified and a working group is expected to meet to discuss an agenda of actions for South Acton under coordination of Patricia and James.

4. Updates on Events, Projects, and Programs (Patricia)

Acton Restaurant Week concluded after five additional days of extended promotions and high visibility of the videos posted on the Town's social media. Patricia asked for suggestions on promoting Shop Small, taking into account experiences from previous years. The group involved with PorchFest has not yet provided updates that would allow for EDC participation. Patricia shared dates of upcoming ribbon-cuttings. Patricia informed about the ongoing process for the establishment of a Foreign Trade Zone in Acton and asked for EDC support in helping identify individuals, organizations, and businesses that can donate to families who have lost SNAP.

5. Policies for Public Participation (Patty / Patricia)

6. EDC Member Updates (All Members)

Patty suggested that Economic Development share a list of vacant commercial properties. Patricia offered to prepare a list to be posted on the ED page and asked Patty, Robert, and Fran to share any available resources that can help update the list regularly so it can reflect the market reality of vacant properties.

IV - Ongoing Matters

1. Outreach / Communication Plan (Mike/ Patricia)

Patricia informed the group that she had reached out to the school to ask about their interest in incorporating the survey into the Social Studies syllabus but has not yet received a response. She added that an alternative approach would be to conduct the survey with volunteers.

2. SEDAP Matrix Updates (Patricia)

Patty and Patricia stressed the importance of aligning EDC actions and projects with SEDAP goals and highlighted the fact that the summarized SEDAP Matrix will continue being shared as supporting material for upcoming EDC meetings with the intent to keep the group focus and update progress.

V- Consent Items

None.

V- ACTION STEPS

Patricia will be the central point of contact for EDC survey and work with Mike and Sharon. Patricia and James will continue working on defining the agenda for the South Acton group, including the TAP application and the selection of names for the working group in preparation for the first meeting.

Supporting Materials

Meeting Minutes October 10, 2025
SEDAP Matrix Updated October 2025
Policies for Public Participation

Next meeting is December 5, 2025 at 10:30 ?

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

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