

Minutes

Town of Acton Economic Development Committee (EDC) Acton Town Hall, Room 204 1-8-2009

Attending: Doug Tindal, Terra Friedrichs, Nicholas Francis, Ann Chang, Bruce Reichlen
Also present: Kristin Alexander (Town Planning Department), Leigh Davis-Honn, Dick Calandrella

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

I. / II. Introduction / Public Input

EDC members agreed that since Vivek Kulkarni has not attended an EDC meeting since summer 2008, and there have been quorum problems, and other citizens have expressed interest in being EDC members, Ms. Friedrichs will ask him to step down from the EDC as a member and to consider being a "Friend of the EDC".

III. Approval of the Minutes

EDC members did not vote on the draft EDC minutes from the 12/18/08 meeting because they had not had time to review them.

IV. Discussion of Current Events

a. Economic News

Mr. Tindal informed the Committee that Acorn filed for Chapter Seven bankruptcy.

b. Projects in Town: proposed, underway, completed, land sales, etc.

Ms. Alexander explained to the Committee that the owner of the Sorrentos / Dental Building on Main Street in Kelley's Corner applied for a site plan amendment. The owner previously requested and received approval from the Town to construct a second story addition. The owner is now requesting to change the plan to a one story addition. EDC members decided not to review the site plan amendment.

c. Comprehensive Planning Process Update (not discussed)

d. BoS presentation January 12 re: our program

Mr. Tindal and Mr. Francis will attend the Selectmen's meeting on 1/12/09 to report on the EDC's proposed program(s).

e. Discussion Re: League of Women Voters Job Fair 2/11

Ms. Chang, who is on the League of Women Voters, explained briefly to the Committee the purpose of the Job Fair and how it will be organized. EDC members agreed that the Job Fair was a good opportunity to recruit interested citizens to participate in EDC tasks under the proposed work program.

V. Path Forward (Proposed EDC Work Program)

EDC members obtained consensus on the EDC responsibilities (see A. below) to be included in the proposed work program and completed by friends of the EDC in teams or work groups. The Committee then assigned people to complete a template (see B. below) for each responsibility **by the 1/15/09 EDC meeting**. The person completing the template should try to write it as clearly/simply as possible but in a way to excite Job Fair participants. At the 1/15/09, the Committee will review the template drafted for each work group and refine it. Each Work Group template will be presented / displayed at the 2/11/09 Job Fair to encourage interested citizens to apply to be on an EDC Work Group. Interested citizens will be asked to complete a Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC) application form or similar form. EDC members will then review the application forms and bring them to the Selectmen and VCC with recommendations for EDC Work Group participants. After participants are chosen, each EDC Work Group will choose a leader, agree to its program, meet on its own, and report back to the EDC with opportunities and/or problems before the due date (most likely 4-6 weeks after the Work Group is formed). EDC members still have to decide what the next step will be after the EDC Work Groups report back on their progress after one month or so (see C. below). EDC members generally agreed that they have an obligation to report back to the 20 people or so who attended the 11/08 EDC Brainstorming Meeting. Mr. Tindal suggested and meeting attendees generally agreed that the work program, if successful, might result in the EDC's role becoming more of an economic development "coordinating" committee.

A. EDC Responsibilities / Work Groups (person assigned to complete the Template)

1. Demographics / Research / Inventory (business, tourism) (Nick Francis)
2. Marketing (inventory, assets, tools, public relations) (Leigh Davis-Honn and Dick Calandrella)
3. Selling Acton to New Businesses / Reinforcing Existing (Terra Friedrichs)
4. Issues Management / Policy (Ann Chang)
5. Infill Projects (Kristin Alexander)
6. Public / Private Leverage (e.g. TIFs/ETAs) (Bill Lawrence and Chris Pappas)
7. Grab Bag (Bruce Reichlen)
8. Strategic Issues (Doug Tindal and Dick Calandrella (re: public relations))
9. Coordination (communication between Work Groups) (Bruce Reichlen and Terra Friedrichs?)

NOTE: Refer to the 11/20/08 EDC minutes for more detail on each Responsibility / Work Group.

B. Template for Each Responsibility / Work Group (to be completed by 1/15/09)

1. Definition
 - a. select an appropriate name for the responsibility / work group
 - b. determine the goals/objectives of the work group (justification)
2. Tasks (identify the types of tasks the group will undertake to address the responsibility)
3. Deliverables (time/results desired – what is expected to come out of the work group and the due date. Note: no due date can exceed 1 year from Work Group inception.)
4. Resources (available or identified to complete the work – could be outside people or agencies, certain technology, specific databases, funding sources, etc.)

C. Draft Work Program Steps

- I. Preparation for the 2/11/09 Job Fair Presentation
 - A. (by 1/15/09 EDC meeting) Assigned person(s) draft template(s) for the Work Group(s)

- B. (on 1/15/09) EDC members review and tweak templates for the Work Groups
- C. (on 1/15/09) The Committee will Decide on which EDC members are:
 - 1. attending (and presenting) the 2/11/09 Job Fair for the EDC
 - 2. preparing the EDC handouts / presentation materials for the 2/11/09 Job Fair

II. 2/11/09 League of Women Voters Job Fair

- A. EDC members present the Work Program and Templates for each Responsibility
- B. Interested Citizens are asked to complete an application form and to identify the Work Group that they wish to participate in

III. Determining Work Group Participants

- A. EDC members review application forms
- B. EDC members recommend Work Group applicants to the Selectmen and VCC
- C. Selectmen and VCC choose Work Group Participants

IV. Work Group Participants Begin Work

- A. Choose a Work Group Leader (preferably the most steadfast person of the group)
- B. Agree on the Template / Program / Tasks
- C. Begin Work / Tasks
- D. Maximum Deadline for Work to be Completed – 1 Year from Group Formation

V. EDC Meeting (4-6 weeks after Work Groups are formed)

- A. Work Groups Report Opportunities / Problems / Needs to the EDC
- B. EDC Provides Feedback

VI. Next Steps?

Ms. Davis-Honn read her draft Marketing Work Group (A2. above) template to the Committee. The Committee provided feedback.

Ms. Alexander agreed to draft the meeting minutes and e-mail them to EDC members and meeting guests as soon as possible. Ms. Alexander also agreed to add the guests to the EDC contacts list and e-mail it to EDC members and guests.

Mr. Reichlen will try to make a general template on the computer to drop all Work Group templates in. He will coordinate with Mr. Tindal.

Mr. Calandrella and Ms. Davis-Honn were encouraged to try to publicize the 2/11/09 Job Fair.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.