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EDC Minutes – 17 July 2014

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 17 July 2014 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Chris Pappas, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Franny Osman, Ken Zhou, Larry Kenah

Not Present: Nancy Dinkel

Visitors: Bharat Shah, David Foley

We welcome Ken Zhou as the newest member of the Economic Development Committee.

David Foley and Bharat Shah, prospective EDC members, also attended the meeting.

The minutes from the 19 June 2013 EDC meeting were not available for approval. They will be approved at the next regularly scheduled EDC meeting on 7 August 2014.

Board of Selectmen Report (3)

Franny Osman gave a brief report on recent BoS activities. She pointed out that the BoS has recently assembled its list of prioritized goals for the upcoming year. This was interesting for two reasons.

- The process that the BoS used to rank its goals might be useful to the EDC as we assemble our list of goals.
- One of the BoS goals for 2014 was to create a timetable for sewers in West Acton. The EDC has long recognized that sewers would increase the business opportunities in West Acton.

Mission and Goals ()

Most of the meeting was devoted to discussions about EDC mission and goals in the context of the EDC reconstituting itself. Here are some key points from that discussion.

- There are four people in the VCC pipeline for EDC.
 - Ken Zhou has since been appointed to the EDC.
- The EDC roster in 2008 was very powerful. We likely do not need as much horsepower in 2014 but we still need full-time representatives from BoS, FinCom, the Planning Board, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Doug Tindal mentioned three focal points for the EDC in 2008.

- Support existing business community
- Provide a focal point for economic development in Acton
 - It is important for all stakeholders to realize that economic development is different from planning.
- Stimulate the development of a sound economic climate

Doug mentioned that people sometimes include a so-called fourth leg in this discussion.

- Attract and encourage new businesses in Acton

Doug Tindal will draft a letter to the town manager requesting the initial charter for the EDC and related documents.

Acton 2020 Update (4)

Larry Kenah presented a brief report on the 9 July 2014 meeting of the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee.

- The consultants from the Cecil Group and its partners are beginning to prepare for the September public meeting.
- Steve Cecil presented a set of principles that they and the KCSC will use to evaluate alternatives.
- On the traffic front, we looked at two possibilities.
 - A small scale project (sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and improved signaling) would provide some benefit to motorists but more benefit to pedestrians and cyclists.
 - A medium sized project would reduce congestion by improved traffic management.
 - We agreed that a large scale effort to address regional traffic issues was way outside the scope of the Kelley's Corner Improvement effort.
- Steve Cecil pointed out that there is no "main street" in the usual sense of the term in Kelley's corner primarily due to traffic volume on both Route 27 and Route 111.

Town Businesses Database Update (6)

In the context of discussing EDC goals, the database of existing businesses was mentioned as an obvious project for the EDC. Dick Calandrella provided some background on previous efforts to populate such a database. We agreed that this project needs more effort than can be applied by EDC volunteers working part time on the database.

Miscellaneous Discussion

- There were a couple of questions during the course of the meeting about whether there would be a fall town meeting.
- Ann Chang related a "good news" story about a hairdresser's move and the excellent support that she received from the town departments.
- Derrick Chin provided an update on the Acton Woods Plaza sign. There are 18 businesses whose names should appear on the sign, requiring three columns (instead of the two columns on the new signs in Edens Plaza, aka Roche Brothers).
- We agreed to meet with Matthias Rosenfeld about the developments in West Acton.

Remaining Agenda Items

There were no updates on agenda items #7 through #9. We agreed that all of these items are possible projects that will be restarted after the EDC reboot.

Upcoming Meetings (10)

We agreed to meet again the following week (24 July 2014) to discuss EDC Mission and Goals.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk