EDC Minutes – 4 December 2014

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. This meeting took place on 4 December 2014 in Room 204 of the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Bharat Shah, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Franny Osman, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not Present: Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal

Josh Fischel joined our meeting. He is looking to join one of the town committees and is visiting several as an observer.

Meeting Minutes (2)

Minutes from the EDC meeting held on 20 November were approved.

Mission and Goals and Objectives (3)

Larry Kenah distributed the text for the mission statement and EDC goals that had been discussed and agreed upon at earlier meetings. People continue to support the mission statement as written. There was less support for the goals. In particular, people did not like the second goal as written.

Process to Complete EDC Reboot Exercise

David Foley and Larry Kenah presented a simple plan to show the remaining steps for the EDC to redefine itself and to present our results to the Board of Selectmen. The following list condenses and simplifies these activities.

1) Mission Statement (complete)
2) Goals (revised during this meeting)
3) Objectives (primary conversation for this evening's meeting)
4) Action Items (or projects, the subject of our next meeting)
5) Evaluation of action items (priority, time to complete, cost, resources needed, etc)
6) Presentation to BoS

Revised Goals

Here is the list of goals at the start of last evening's meeting.

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Original EDC Goals

- Take care of existing businesses
- Remove/knock down obstacles for new and existing businesses
- Market Acton to the outside world by providing relevant information to prospective businesses

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After some discussion and an attempt to rewrite the first goal, we decided that the original text best expressed our continued support for existing businesses.

We completely rewrote the second goal. The final text reads as follows.

> Facilitate the relationships between businesses and town government

People especially supported the word "town" in this goal.

We agreed to replace the word "Market" in the third goal with the word "Promote".

With these changes, the revised EDC goals look like this.

Revised EDC Goals

- Take care of existing businesses
- Facilitate the relationships between businesses and town government
- Promote Acton to the outside world by providing relevant information to prospective businesses

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The changes are highlighted in yellow.

Objectives and Action Items

We spent some time discussing the difference between objectives and action items. We arrived at the conclusion that action items (that will turn into projects with deliverables and delivery dates) are the most important result of our reboot effort but that we need to put them into an overall structure that will make it easier for both us and our sponsors (BoS, other boards and committees, town departments, etc) to understand and evaluate our work.

Each goal addresses the overall EDC Mission Statement. Each goal in turn includes a set of objectives. Each objective contains one or more action items. Note that some action items might support more than one objective and some objectives might support more than one goal. The overall structure looks like this.

- Mission Statement
  - First Goal
    - Objective
      - Action Item
    - Objective
      - Action Item
      - Action Item
  - Second Goal
    - Objective
      - Action Item
      - Action Item
    - Objective
      - Action Item
      - Action Item

- Action Item
- Action Item
  - Objective
    - Action Item
  - Third Goal
    - Objective
      - Action Item
      - Action Item
      - Action Item
    - Objective
      - Action Item
    - <mark>Objective</mark>
    - Objective
      - Action Item
      - Action Item

Note that one objective (<mark>highlighted in yellow</mark>) has no action items that support it. If we create objectives like this, we will either look for supporting action items or discard the objective.

Objectives

During the conversation that followed, we discussed a mixture of objectives and action items. By examining specific items, we were able to recognize the distinction between the two. Here are some objectives that surfaced.

- Ombudsman
- Marketing
- Infrastructure
  - Sewers in West Acton
  - Transportation
  - Parking
- West Acton business growth
- Improving the business climate
- Communication strategy

Action Items

Here is a small sample of action items that we talked about. We found it relatively easy to match action items to objectives.

- Promote businesses at the train station
- Monitor progress of town hall renovations, specifically with an eye on how the revisions will make it easier for businesses to obtain permits and conduct other activities with town departments.
- Create a town newsletter aimed specifically at businesses.

- This might contain, for example, proposed zoning changes that might have an impact on businesses.

Subcommittees

Toward the end of the meeting, David Foley proposed that we create subcommittees to work on objectives (and perhaps action items) for each of the three goals. The goal for this proposal was that we could use the next meeting or two to discuss existing works in progress rather than trying to create the lists from scratch.

The following committees were created.

First Goal	Second Goal	Third Goal
• Ann Chang • Nancy Dinkel • Larry Kenah (chair)	• Derrick Chin • David Foley (chair) • Doug Tindal	• Allan Gulliver (chair) • Franny Osman • Bharat Shah

David suggested that anyone on the committee can send suggestions for each goal to the chair of each subcommittee.

Each subcommittee will report back to full committee at our next meeting, scheduled for 18 December 2014.

Remaining Agenda Items (4..7)

There were no updates on agenda items 4 through 7. Work on these projects will be clarified after we go through the detailed discussion of EDC mission, goals, and projects.

Homework Assignments

One of these suggestions was explicitly mentioned during the meeting. The second, while not explicitly called out, should provide a starting point for each of the three subcommittees.

- Take a look at EDC materials from surrounding towns including Westford, Littleton, and Concord.
- Look at the list of goals, objectives, and action items created by David Foley and Bharat Shah last summer. We should check that each item appears on at least one of the three lists being created by the subcommittees.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk