

EDC Minutes – 3 September 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 3 September 2015 at the Acton Town Hall in Room 204.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Ann Chang, Chingsung Chang, David Foley, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not present: Allan Gulliver, Bharat Shah, Doug Tindal

Summary

To accommodate our visitor, Marc Foster, we moved his report on West Acton business to the top of the agenda.

Report – West Acton Business (6)

Marc Foster manages two properties in Acton including the building at the Corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Central Street (Red, White, and Brew; A Cut above; etc). Here are some brief notes on his views about doing business in Acton.

- This building is a well performing property. It is almost fully occupied. (There is a remaining apartment on the second floor that is vacant.)
- The Historic District Commission has been difficult to deal with although the “personality” of the HDC seems to have improved recently.
- Acton is comparable to surrounding towns in terms of ease of doing business.
- He has had no serious issues with the town.
- Times have improved for property owners in recent years.
 - Construction costs are lower.
 - Rents are increasing.
- Parking is a chronic problem in West Acton.
 - Some people take advantage of parking at the Christian Science Church around the corner on Central Street even though those parking spots belong to the church.
 - Marc has been unable to contact any person connected to the church since Howard Canning passed away a couple of years ago.

Marc acknowledged that he needs to fix several “historic violations” before his other historic applications will see any progress.

Public Participation (1)

There was no public participation.

Meeting Minutes (2)

The minutes from the EDC meeting on 20 August 2015 were approved with no changes.

Board of Selectmen Report (3)

Chingsung Chang had no updates from the BoS.

Re-Organization of the EDC (4)

The member list on the EDC Web page has been updated so that its contents agree with the EDC master list. There is still an issue that nearly all member terms expire in June 2017.

Rather than ask others to propose a solution, we agreed that we would create a list of members and expiry dates that are spread across 2016, 2017, and 2018. A few members expressed a preference for a particular year. Larry Kenah agreed to create a list that we would approve among ourselves and then submit to the BoS via Chingsung Chang.

This draft list was sent to all EDC members shortly after the meeting ended. Josh Fischel created the initial draft during the meeting.

Land Use/Economic Development Director (5)

Dick Calandrella and David Foley met with Steve Ledoux for an update on the applicant appraisal process to fill this position.

- There were more than forty applicants for the position.
- Eight applicants made it to the second round.
 - No local applicant made it past the first round.
 - Only one of these applicants is from Massachusetts.
 - The applicants display a mix of backgrounds.
- The second step in the process would take place in two to three weeks.
- The town manager asked that a representative from the Planning Board and from the EDC participate in the day long appraisal and evaluation process.

Steve also mentioned a little about after a person is hired into this role.

- There would be a goal setting session with the ED Director and the town manager.
- The EDC would advise and be consulted by the ED Director.

As a final note, Steve announced that he would be retiring in three years.

Ease of Doing Business (7)

In the context of this agenda item, Derrick Chin noted that the Planning Board had no activities related to Brookside Shops planned for Fall Town Meeting.

David Foley informed the EDC that the proposed crosstown connect fixed-route options have been posted for public input at town hall by Doug Halley. The route selected is expected to begin operating in early to mid October 2015. The proposed route will include stops at

- Shopping centers

- Restaurants
- Commuter hubs (South Acton Train Station, etc)
- Population centers
- Senior High School
- Junior High School
- Town Hall/Library

Acton 2020 Update (8)

Larry Kenah reported on two items of interest to the EDC from meetings of the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee.

Plan Not Ready

The Kelley's Corner Steering Committee met on 26 August 2015 in the early morning. After more than an hour of discussion about remaining work and upcoming meetings and presentations, the KCSC reached the conclusion that it was not ready for a public presentation on 21 September or for proposed zoning changes at Fall Town Meeting.

At the end of this lengthy discussion, the committee voted to delay the final steps in the overall initiative. The committee realized that this might eliminate the need for Fall Town Meeting.

Stop & Shop Representatives

In mid-August, a representative from Stop & Shop contacted Roland Bartl and requested a meeting with the KCSC. Stop & Shop owns the property where the Kmart store is located. This meeting took place on 3 September 2015.

Linda Costanzo, director of real estate for Stop & Shop, presented a brief overview of Stop & Shop's perspective.

- They have been watching the progress of KCSC.
- The Kmart site has been "dormant for thirty years".
- The timing is right for looking at opportunities for this site.
- Emphasis is mostly on the Stop & Shop site all by itself. (Thinking did not include either the Verizon property or the Baker Oil site.)

Linda introduced Adam Winstanley, a developer and a local preferred vendor of Stop & Shop.

Mission and Goals and Objectives (7)

After a brief discussion about bringing this effort to a conclusion, Allan Gulliver, David Foley, and Larry Kenah agreed to meet again to focus on the remaining work, the selection of a short list of projects that the EDC will immediately begin to work on.

- This group had created an initial short list of projects that the EDC would select its work from. Based on feedback from members, a "better" list of candidate projects would be developed and distributed to EDC members.
- A selection process to put the list of projects into a priority order would also be defined and sent to EDC members.

Town Businesses Database Update (10)

Dick Calandrella thought that this project was first proposed and started in about 2009.

Marketing Survey (11)

There is nothing to report on this agenda item.

Upcoming Meetings (12)

Chingsung Chang reminded the committee that he would miss the meetings on 17 September and 1 October. (The 17 September 2015 meeting was cancelled.)

In Closing

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk.