

EDC Minutes – 1 October 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 1 October 2015 at the Acton Town Hall in Room 204.

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Bharat Shah, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not present: Ann Chang, Chingsung Chang, David Foley, Doug Tindal, Josh Fischel

Summary

Editor's Note: The items that appear in the posted agenda contain an item between Item 6 and Item 7. In these minutes, that item, Reorganization of the EDC, will be called item "78" as indicated in the posted agenda. All other items will be identified in the usual numerical order.

Public Participation (1)

There was no public participation.

Presentation – Richard Ellert, COO of Associated Environmental Systems (2)

Our guest speaker for the evening was Richard Ellert, COO of Associated Environmental Systems (AES). AES builds test chambers that allow products to be tested under extreme environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, salt, etc). Some of the smaller chambers are as big as a microwave oven while others are large enough to accommodate an automobile.

The reason for Mr Ellert's visit is that AES is interested in moving to Acton, specifically to the former Milton Roy building next to the main post office building.

Company Bits and Pieces

Mr Ellert spent several slides in his presentation describing the AES business. Here is a brief summary.

- AES builds the test chambers but does not do any product testing.
- Its customers include large US manufacturers including auto makers and high tech product vendors (mobile phones and the like).
- AES is currently located in Ayer.
- The company wants to grow and is unable to do so in its current location. Limitations include space and electrical power.
- The Milton Roy building has the space needed for growth and has enough electrical power to allow for growth.
- The company currently employs approximately 50 people. The growth plan will more than double that number.

Town of Acton Points of Interest

Mr Ellert has already met with the town manager and with several town departments. Here is a quick update on points of interest.

- AES is working with the Health Department.
- The manufacturing process does not produce any waste chemicals.
- Text chambers are built and tested by AES at its manufacturing site. They are then taken apart, shipped to a customer site, and reassembled. There are no extraordinary shipping requirements.
- The Building Department and the Fire Department have performed preliminary reviews of the building and no issues were raised.
- Mr Ellert described working with departments in town as a “wonderful experience”.

There are two areas where Mr Ellert would like some financial support from the town.

- The parking lot also serves as a right of way for Acton Water District properties. AES would like to cooperate with the town in repaving the parking lot and access roads.
- AES is looking for some tax relief. In particular, they would like active support for their EDIC application.
 - Dick Calandrella indicated that he would contact the town manager to get Mr Ellert on the agenda of an upcoming BoS meeting. This meeting took place on 6 October 2015.
 - AES is on the BoS agenda for 19 October 2015.

AES planned to make a decision (Acton or Ayer) by 15 October. They did not need all issues resolved by that date but were looking for indications of support from the town on these items.

Meeting Minutes (3)

The minutes from the EDC meeting on 3 September 2015 were approved with no changes.

Board of Selectmen Report (4)

Chingsung Chang was not at the meeting so there was no update from the BoS.

Discuss 5 Strawberry Hill Road (5)

This is the address of Rapscallion's Restaurant. The owners have submitted a special use permit application to expand their parking capacity. After a brief discussion, Derrick Chin and Allan Gulliver agreed that they would follow up on the details of this request.

Discuss 252 - 256 Main Street (6)

This is the former location of McDonald's. There is a request (site plan special permit application) to build a “110 Grill” restaurant at this location. There was little information available but the committee will watch developments associated with this request.

Re-Organization of the EDC (“78”)

Nancy Dinkel will contact the new executive director of the West Middlesex chapter of the Chamber of Commerce about getting a second EDC rep from the chamber. The second chamber slot has been vacant since Chris Pappas left the EDC.

Land Use/Economic Development Director (7)

There was no update on hiring a person to fill this position.

Ease of Doing Business (8)

There was no discussion about this item.

Acton 2020 Update (9)

Larry Kenah reported on two recent meetings of the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee.

KCSC Meeting on 22 September 2015

The committee is putting together a plan for completing the various documents and publicizing them to the community.

- Kelley's Corner neighbors
- Board of Selectmen
- Planning Board (zoning changes)
- General public
- Town Meeting

The current plan is to complete all documents before the holidays with most meetings taking place between the first of the year and school vacation week.

Stop & Shop Meeting - 30 September 2015

KCSC met the previous evening with representatives of Stop & Shop. They provided detailed feedback on proposed zoning changes and design guidelines. Members were grateful for the detailed feedback and will consider that feedback when completing the various plan documents.

Mission and Goals and Objectives (10)

The specific for discussion was a review of the short list of projects that the EDC would begin to work on. Since only six of eleven members were present for this important topic, we decided to postpone the discussion of projects until the next EDC meeting, scheduled for 15 October 2015.

Marketing Survey (11)

There is nothing to report on this agenda item.

Upcoming Meetings (12)

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for 15 October 2015.

In Closing

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

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

