

Minutes of the Economic Development Committee

Thursday, November 2, 2017

Room 9, Acton Town Hall

Present: Selby, Mike Majors, David Foley, Josh Fischel, Ann Chang, Larry Kenah, Dave Didriksen

Absent: Chingsung Chang, Derrick Chin, Peter Daniel

We pick up the meeting already in progress (your humble clerk had a middle school cross-country meet that ran late due to transportation problems).

Mass Development's Real Estate Services—Call for Proposals

- If we submit a proposal, what should we propose?

There are two ideas/parcels to focus on: South Acton and the Walker property.

The discussion appears to involve Selby updating us on progress around a boutique hotel on the Walker property. The point of contention for a lot of potential developers is sewer access. David Foley suggests that sewer priority needs to go to West Acton to stop the decay of their system. There's no way a sewer would cross Route 2. Larry Kenah asks if we should revisit the idea of whether a boutique hotel and restaurant is the best use of that land; because it was where people at the forum wanted us to explore, Selby would prefer to wait to be told it's impossible before abandoning the idea and looking at other options.

Idea #2 is to combine the Civil Defense building plus adjoining parcels to create a master-plan sort of thing: restaurant, parking, apartments. The committee feels this should be shelved for a year.

Motion by Ann (sorry, David): I move that we direct Selby to apply to Mass Development for a grant to fund a feasibility study for a hotel/restaurant on the Walker Property.
This passes unanimously.

We'll know if this will be funded in January or February.

Special Town Meeting

We discussed Brookside Shops and the fate of national retailers currently residing there. J.Jill and Talbot's might not be long for this world.

The sense of the EDC is that we should issue a strongly worded statement in support of the related warrant article. Larry will write these strong words and we will approve them or revise them at our next meeting.

Article #2 is a temporary moratorium on recreational marijuana.

Article #3 is a ban on recreational marijuana in the town.

Dave Didriksen says we should not take a position on these articles because they're too controversial and the economic impact (\$600,000) is minimal. The sense of the committee seems to be to agree with him.

Fun Fact of the Evening: Larry played games with egg timers in his youth.

Current and Future EDC Projects

Selby wants to work on the business guide with all of us.

He'd like to churn up a Buy Local campaign; Dave is not a fan because retail is hurting.

Mike Majors asks whether we should get ahead of the opening of the two bike paths this coming spring.

Updates from Members

Ann Chang talks about the history of Acton sewers, which leads us to talk about The Schools. Is the \$1.5 million an inflated number for a feasibility study for building new schools? Mike thinks that could be a little high, but not by that much. That figure does not include the actual plans of the school.

Adjournment

It happened at 9:10 pm.