



Economic Development Committee Minutes  
22 September 2023  
12:00 PM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 9/22/23, held virtually via Zoom.

Called to Order: 12:03 pm

EDC Members Present: Catherine Usoff, Michael Carpenter, Patty Sutherland, Ann Chang, David Cote, Dan Malloy

EDC Members Absent: Shirley Ming,

Also present: Julie Pierce, Fran Arsenault

**Preliminaries**

Catherine read the preamble regarding state rules for a Zoom meeting and participation.

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above

**1. Regular Business**

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meeting June 23, 2023.
- Meeting minutes were approved by all members in attendance, except for Dan Malloy who abstained because he was not at the June 23 meeting. Please note that today's meeting (9/22/23) replaced the previously proposed dates for a follow-up meeting in the 6/23/23 minutes due to scheduling conflicts.

**2. More Regular Business**

The meeting opened with an update from EDC members.

**Update from Economic Development Director - Julie Pierce**

Julie has committed to sending the EDC department updates in advance of a scheduled meeting to enable more discussion about follow-up and action items.

Julie reviewed upcoming events and requested assistance or volunteers to attend or participate as representation from the EDC. The following table summarizes the commitments made by EDC members to this request. See Julie's update in the repository for a broader description of these events.

Event	Date	EDC Participant
Silver Unicorn Bookstore – After Hours Networking	9/27/23 @ 5:30PM	Catherine Usoff
Ribbon Cutting - 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Parent Estate Planning law firm	9/28/23 @ noon	Town representative to attend
Ribbon Cutting – Grand Re-Opening – Gardner Field Playground	9/29/23 @ 10AM	Dan Malloy
Acton Children's Business Fair – NARA Park	10/7/23 @ noon	Michael Carpenter
Acton Boxborough DiwaliFest 2023 – Sargent Memorial Library - Boxborough	10/8/23 @ noon	Patty Sutherland
Grand Opening - Ribbon Cutting – Bogi Boutique - 133 Great Road	10/20/23 @ noon	Catherine Usoff
Publicize Energy Efficiency Grants - Small Businesses Energy Audits	Before 10/8/23	Michael Carpenter Patty Sutherland

## Other Economic Development Updates

Julie also encouraged members to attend the **West Acton Village Octoberfest, on Saturday, September 30** from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Gardner Field.

### Small Business Roundtable hosted by MWCOC

New initiative by MWCOC for businesses to help each other in terms of strategy, planning and sharing best practices. Learn more and sign up here: <https://mwcoc.com/index.php/programs/>

### Local Job Board

The Economic Development Office is partnering with the AB United Way on an initiative they're offering through the brand new AB United Way Resource Center: a hyper local job board. Local businesses and organizations can share their job postings and local residents can find great jobs right here in our community. They're also hosting a local resource and job fair on Monday Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm. Learn more here: <https://abuw.org/news/ab-schools-united-way-partnership-welcome-ab-resource-center>

### From Julie's written update: FREE In Control Crash Prevention Grant Training for Business!

Your local business team could be eligible for a FREE Crash Prevention Training course! The Workforce Training Fund Express Program covers 100% of Massachusetts companies with less than 100 employees.

Don't miss the opportunity to protect your team, reduce risk exposure, and positively

impact your bottom line. Contact Non Profit Drive In Control for grant assistance: <https://bit.ly/3pPUyWF>.

### **Update on South Acton Village Vision and Action Plan - Catherine Usoff**

Catherine described how the focus has been on identifying the areas that will be re-zoned to allow for multi-family units by right, according to the Massachusetts MBTA Communities Requirement (Section 3A). The current focus is on two overlay districts:

- 1) Smaller units (10 units/acre), closer to the train station where there are shallower lots of land.
- 2) Larger units (30? units/acre)
  - a. Powder Mill (site of proposed complex)
  - b. Parker Street (with or without the WR Grace land included)
  - c. 177 Central Street – Dover Heights (currently 71 units there)

Additional ideas:

- 1) Encourage mixed use development along Main Street/Route 27 from Central Street to Prospect by allowing for an additional story over residential structures.
- 2) Include features to facilitate commercial development such as sidewalks and on-street parking.

There is a public session on Tuesday, October 3 at Acton Memorial Library, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. to obtain feedback on the proposed zoning plan and sites.

Future work of the group: propose an overlay district in the area between Central Street and Railroad Street (behind the current location of tattoo parlor, hair salon) that will incentivize a coordinated plan for a village-like commercial district.

### **Update and Support of RH Adhesives petitions with the town – Michael Carpenter**

Mike Carpenter, CEO of RH Adhesives, has been working with the Planning Director to make a good-faith effort to improve/restore the land next to his business. As a result of the visit by town employees, Mike learned that he had to go through a series of applications and receive approvals related to a recently installed storage unit that sits on footings behind his building.

His proposed plan was approved by the planning board on 9/19 and the process now moves to the Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. The dates of these two hearings have not yet been set. The EDC's support of RH Adhesives aligns with the committee's goal of retaining existing businesses in town and Mike was very appreciative of the ongoing support. The EDC will monitor the schedule of the upcoming hearings and will continue to offer support for a resolution as required.

### **Next Meeting – October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Based on a poll in the meeting it was determined that 10/13 at noon (Zoom Meeting) was the best time for the next EDC meeting. Although the committee will generally meet the first Friday

of every month, we may alter the schedule for holiday weekends as warranted (such as for the October meeting). The focus of the October meeting will be to establish goals and objectives for the EDC for the next 12 months.

## **Other Upcoming Meetings**

Fran highlighted that there is a meeting on 9/27 from 11 to 1PM in room 204 at the town hall regarding the Sewer Commission report on the Great Road Wastewater Planning efforts. EDC members were encouraged to try and attend this important update.

## **New/Special Business**

### **EDC Goal Setting for 2023 – 2024.**

In anticipation of establishing EDC goals for the year (2023/2024), we had a preliminary discussion of the Select Board goals for 2023-24 (see list in repository) and began targeting initiatives that aligned with the EDC's charter to represent the voice of local businesses. There were several of the Select Board goals (both short and long term) that should impact on how we set our objectives for the upcoming year. While we should consider all Select Board goals, the following represent the area's most relevant to the EDC's objectives and planning:

### **Priority FY24 Select Board Goals for the EDC:**

**In all cases the EDC should prepare to represent the voice of businesses around these initiatives:**

3. Explore ways to diversify and expand on public transportation program
8. Secure funding to create an economic development plan
9. Investigate options for wastewater management in targeted economic zones.
15. Conduct a sewer commission analysis
17. Implement zoning changes to meet MBTA zoning standards and Acton goals

### **Select Board Long Term Goals**

The EDC also felt these long-term objectives should also be factored into our planning session

3. Funding for the 250th celebration event
4. Complete Economic Development plan before the comprehensive community plan
7. Explore ban on gas powered lawn maintenance equipment.

### **Next Steps and Action Items**

Catherine will summarize, define, and distribute potential EDC goals for discussion at the next meeting on 10/13 @ noon.

### **The meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.**

For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to [EDC@actonma.gov](mailto:EDC@actonma.gov)