

Minutes of the Economic Development Committee

Thursday, December 7th, 2017

Room 9, Acton Town Hall

Present: Derrick Chin, Selby, Mike Majors, Josh Fischel, Peter Daniel, Larry Kenah, Shirley Ming, Ann Chang

Absent: Chingsung Chang, David Foley, Dave Didriksen

Presentation from Jessica Strunkin, Deputy Director of 495/MetroWest Partnership:

- described nature of public/private partnership and why they exist
- not a chamber of commerce
- our region has grown to \$23 billion in annual payroll from \$2 billion at some point in the past (the 1980s, I believe)
- our region accounts for 1 out of every 11 jobs in the state
- she accounts for half the staff of the partnership
- how can the state work with suburban communities in a better way
- at a presentation of the partnership that Selby attended this morning, they heard a presentation about PACE (renewable energy resource)
- working more with regional colleges (Framingham State, etc) than with vocational schools; they recognize the value in the latter, but again: two-person office
- Acton is way ahead in terms of public transportation in this region; MassDOT will be conducting a comprehensive commuter rail study soon
- can we bring local EDCs together for a forum or other useful gathering? Larry Kenah called around about a year ago and has visited a couple, too
- we can make introductions with infrastructure engineering firms and site search efforts to help connect businesses and communities and to help determine site readiness for such a connection
- we're sensitive to environmental concerns and the lack of affordable housing in our region as we're looking at development opportunities
- funded through state grants and private sector investors and voluntary annual stipends from towns of \$500/year (got that from Acton—seems worth it!)
- other regional partnerships: Middlesex is made up of nine communities; some are focused on transportation, others go to trade shows trying to attract business, or focus on transportation; 495/MetroWest is focused just as much on retention as on attraction

Fun Fact du Jour: Jessica Strunkin's packet of information includes encouragement to market fun facts!

Public Participation: Two political science students from ABRHS are visiting! Jamie describes the assignment.

Approval of Minutes: Approved with minimal changes.

Special Town Meeting: There was an informal post mortem about the logistics and content of town meeting.

Article about EDC in Town Report: Due in mid-January; what do we include in it? Insulet should be mentioned, plus an ongoing business census.

Updates from Members: Tailgaters is closed. Peter Daniel said someone who has a sports bar in Winchester will open one there soon. Ann Chang said she went to a housing authority meeting about the Walker Property; they drew up plans for a feasibility study for an apartment building there. Larry says we should start the new year training all our committee's supernatural powers on South Acton. Derrick Chin has an update: there's a meeting with Winstanley Associates next Thursday, the 14th.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:23 pm. Go Pats.