



These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of 4/1/21, held remotely at 7 pm

Called to Order: 7:03 pm

Members Present: Mike Majors, Ann Chang, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah, Catherine Usoff, David Cote, David Didriksen, Derrick Chin, Shirley Ming, Dan Malloy

Staff Present: Matt Murphy

Members Absent: Peter Daniel, Jon Benson

### **Regular Business**

1. Review of meeting minutes from previous meetings

Minutes from March 18th are approved, unanimously, 9-0, with one abstention.

2. Public participation

There is none.

### **II. New/Special Business**

3. Subcommittee Reports

- LRRP (David D. and Derrick): Derrick reports that they ran into administrative inflexibility. He and David were disappointed in the questions in a questionnaire that the consultant, Tom Loughlin, a transportation engineer, from DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development) came up with for Selby to send to businesses. They didn't feel like they were able to add any meaningful input, and thus, the survey will be "a lot of sound and fury, signifying nothing," according to both David and MacBeth. As a former business owner, David said the last thing he would have wanted was to fill out the same information every year. Catherine suggests that the standardized data collection is a first step to see the effects of COVID across the region. The incentive to participate is to provide a facilitator and subject-matter experts, and the idea is to come up with a plan by the end of August to help businesses overcome the problems they encountered through the pandemic. David argues that the questions didn't seem to address those profound problems. "We already know that businesses are getting killed," he says. Larry suggests that David and Derrick write a note to Selby about their frustrations. Dan Malloy asks if the results of the survey might affect the amount of money businesses could receive through government aid; we are collectively unsure.

- Business Inventory (Mike, with David D. and Larry)

The team members were unable to get together due to COVID-19-related technical issues.

- Strategic Plan (David C., Josh, and Catherine)

We looked at some relevant materials shared by both David C. and Selby—economic analyses, other towns' strategic plans, Judi Barrett's findings, how-to documents, etc. We talked about how to approach the planning process, which included figuring out how to construct the team developing said plan, especially stakeholders from outside the EDC. Ann Chang suggests a lawyer, specifically Lou Levine. "He has a lot to say," she says. She also suggests adding

someone from the Design Review Board; doesn't name names on that front, though. David D. suggests that we'll want creative, outside-the-box thinkers instead of just people with the most property or longevity. David C. encourages everyone to ask for those sort of names. Dan Malloy says that someone who really understands the real estate investment market, not necessarily from town, would be great. Names are tossed out; I won't record them here. Larry suggests sending suggestions to this subcommittee's

There is discussion of how to make sure that what we develop is useful and doesn't become what Larry refers to as "shelf-ware."

- The Ann Chang Project

The DPW needs to get reports back from various consultants before she can proceed on some of her work. I missed a little of her content because I was too busy speculating about what kind of '70s band 'The Ann Chang Project' would be. (Ann wants to refer to her personal working group as 'Miscellaneous Projects,' which this humble clerk rejects as not catchy enough.)

- 50 Nagog (Dan and Shirley)

Dan reports that there's a plan for a build-out at 50 Nagog, targeting life sciences. The build-out will begin in May, and it'll be ready for occupancy by January, 2022. Dan says this is a good start—tenants need to be found, though he's optimistic that the developer can handle that—and something that can and should be replicated around town. Shirley continues, sharing a spreadsheet she's created about the five phases of their plan, including key activities, any external dependencies, and what their definition is of 'done.'

Ann suggests learning about the developer's marketing plan so we can crib from it.

David D. says this is an opportunity to improve the message about how welcoming the town is to new businesses. Dan hopes that more dialogue with the Bio Council will help us understand what the expectation is from life sciences-relevant businesses.

Mike Majors suggests that we coordinate with transportation authorities to make sure we have a handle on how to get new businesses' employees into and around town—and/or how to get them to live here, too.

#### 4. Discussion Re: LRRP Survey (All)

The committee feels that it is unnecessary to add more onto this.

#### 5. Discussion Re: "Wrestling with Growth in Acton, MA" (David C.)

Mike says that what struck him from reading the article was that the town's planning was reactive instead of proactive.

There is more discussion about the context of the article and the potential intentions of those framing the narrative. A caller advocates for having more economic development folks on the strategic planning committee.

### **III. More Regular Business**

#### 6. Updates from members

David Cote wishes Selby a speedy recovery on behalf of the committee.

Ann Chang is planning to attend the next Powdermill Road meeting, on April 8th. She suggests we attend the Planning Board meeting on April 13th, when drive-thrus will be discussed. We will still meet separately on 4/15. Larry thanks Matt Murphy for his technical assistance this evening.

7. Next meeting – 15 April 2021
- IV. **Consent Items**
9. None

Meeting is adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Additional materials

- Draft meeting minutes from 18 March 2021
- The 50 Nagog subcommittee template
- [“Wrestling with Growth in Acton, MA,”](#) by Alexander von Hoffman
- [“Optimal Suburban Densities: History and Theory,”](#) by Bill Fischel

*The listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.*

*Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need, including as much detail as you can and include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow advance notice. Send an e-mail to **manager@actonma.gov** or call Town Manager’s Office **(978)929-6611***

For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to **EDC@actonma.gov**