



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 15, 2011, 7:30 PM, Room 126 – Acton Town Hall

Present: Dick Calandrella/Full Member, Ann Chang/At Large Member, Derrick Chin/Planning Board Rep, Nancy Dinkel/Chamber Rep, Jeff Hall/Full Member, and Harry Mink/Full Member/Clerk **Absent:** David Clough/Selectman, David Didriksen/Member at Large and Rep, Chris Pappas/Chamber and Doug Tindal/FinCom Rep & Acting FinCom Chairman

Quorum: Yes

Public/Visitors: None present

EDC Meeting Called to Order: 7:37 PM by Nancy D. who chaired the meeting

1. **Public Participation** – nobody from the general public was present, therefore there was none
2. **Approval of Minutes** –Nancy D. asked about the Minutes of 12-01-11 and after suggestions by Dick C., Derrick C. and Nancy D. a Vote was held and the Minutes were unanimously approved, as amended by the EDC members present. **Action Item:** Harry M. to forward the aforementioned Amended, Approved EDC Minutes to clerk@acton-ma.gov
3. **MAPC focus on Transportation** – An initial consensus was to hold this topic off until the January 5th meeting, but Jeff H. arrived and gave us an update. Jeff had replied to the E-mail saying that he and EDC was interested in learning more. Nancy D. suggested we invite Ann to attend an upcoming EDC meeting as there did appear to be some potential synergies with EDC. **Action Item:** Jeff H. to contact Ann and invite her to an EDC meeting and then to notify Nancy D. so she could put her and this topic on the EDC Agenda.
4. **Planning Board input re Zoning Bylaws/EDC's suggestions to change** – Dick C. informed the group that he'd looked into a deadline for the submission of proposed bylaw changes and learned that anytime by/before the end of December would be acceptable. Dick C. also remarked that this agenda item was sufficiently similar that they might be merged.
5. **Review of Sign By-Laws** – Nancy D. asked for feedback by those in attendance regarding Section 7 of the By-Laws. Jeff H. made copies of an Ann C. commented Section 7 document dated October 2010 for everyone to review together. Derrick C. had a copy of Section 7 that was more current, dated April 2011, but we proceeded to walk through the October 2010 document that everyone had in-hand. The following comments and/or suggestions were made when Nancy D. directed EDC by walking through Section 7 of the Town of Acton Zoning Bylaw, October 2010:

-Pg 99 – Ok, "as is" with the suggestion that appropriate definitions from other areas of the Bylaw be added in a simplified stand-alone document which is referred to in the EDC as "the English version" which would be used to inform a new business to Acton about the Sign Bylaws.

-Pg 100 –add LED whenever Neon is mentioned as LED signs appear to be the emerging sign technology

-Pg 100 –add a definition for Special Events Signs (covered in section 7.11 Pg 111)

-Pg 102 –add a new Para 7.3.14 disallowing any/all signs of any type on Acton commons, especially the Acton Center Common which is the nation's first war memorial and should be considered by all as sacred ground

-Pg 102 –suggestion to put all EAV comments in the same area of "the English version" signs document

-Pg 102 –there was an observation about enforcement of 7.4.3.1 (illumination 30 min. before opening/after closing)-i.e has it ever been enforced and who is responsible for enforcement



- Pg 102 -"opaque" language in Para 7.4.3.4 needs illustrations to be understandable; in "the English version" document, it is highly recommended that photo or sketched examples be liberally used to illustrate the meanings of various sign codes and regulations
- Pg 103 –it was suggested that in "the English version" document, Acton village requirements be put in the same area
- Pg 103 –Para 7.4.3.8 eliminate the entire first sentence because it is confusing and isn't needed to convey the meaning . . . "Light fixtures including bulbs or tubes used for SIGN illumination should be selected and positioned to achieve the desired brightness of the SIGN with the minimum possible wattage while ensuring compliance with all applicable requirements of this Bylaw."
- Pg 104 –in Para 7.5.3 . . . Nancy D. has issues with . . . "Any SIGN ERECTED in a side or rear yard required under this Bylaw unless such SIGN is affixed to an existing BUILDING, or unless such SIGN is a directional SIGN listed in Section 7.5.3" First, what sign I "required" under this Bylaw? Then, how can it be required if it's in a prohibited section? Also, if it's in a yard, how can it be affixed to a building? David C., in a post-meeting E-mail on this item, suggests EDC first talk to Scott/Roland for an interpretation assuming that the Town Attorney required this language.
- Pg 106 –when reading Para 7.5.18 it was noted that lots of yard or garage sale signs are illegally stapled on telephone poles
- Pg 106 –it was noted that there are now "Open" flags that aren't addressed
- Pg 106 –the 60 day response period in Para 7.6.2 is considered totally unacceptable and EDC recommends a maximum of 30 days response be written into the regulations
- Pg 111 –Para 7.10 dealing with Special Event SIGNS, the discussion of the prominent use of utility poles isn't addressed and they can be a hazard especially if illegible; also, non-profit signs from other (Concord, MA) communities are often noticed and need to be addressed; also, the last sentence of this paragraph isn't enforced and on it's face is a ridiculous requirement of a business owner.
- Pg 111 –Para 7.12 Non-Conforming SIGNS – something needs to be said regarding "grandfathered" SIGNS that are non-conforming Ex: Colonial Chevrolet on Rt 2-A
- Pg 113 –EDC suggests that "common sense" be used to grant special permits or variances when a business owner has a sign infraction that isn't outrageous and is usually made by a vendor who pulls the permit on behalf of the business and doesn't inform the owner that the sign they are providing is in violation of the Action Sign By-law.
- Pg 114 –it is highly recommended by the EDC that the language related to all violations found outside of Section 7 be added inside Section 7 and modified by inserting wording that speaks to . . . "up to \$300/day" instead of . . . "\$300/day" fines and that common sense be used when levying fines to better fit the actual situation in hand.

Action Item: Nancy D. to contact Roland Bartl via E-mail to put in a placeholder for EDC suggestions for changes to Section 7 pertaining to the Sign Laws. **Action Item:** Derrick C. to type up in MS Word file format and distribute the attached proposed "English version" notes.

6. Update on Electronic Business Directory – Geoff H. said that John Murray didn't respond to his E-mail request concerning the Nielson data he is supposed to have.. **Action Item:** Jeff H. to redouble his efforts to get John Murray to respond to his question about the Nielson data.
7. Update on Marketing Survey – Nancy D. reported that nothing was done in this area and that it was her understanding that Doug T. was to contact Leigh Davis-Honn, but hasn't had an update.
8. Upcoming Scheduled Meetings – 7:30 PM in Room 204, Acton Town Hall: 1-5-12, 1-19-12, 2-2-12, 2-16-12, 3-1-12, 3-15-12, 4-4-12, 4-19-12, 5-3-12, 5-17-12 and 6-21-12 at the Acton Town Hall.

Adjourn – The EDC Meeting was adjourned at/around 9:45 PM.

Next Regular EDC Meeting (7:30 PM, January 5, 2012 in Room 204 Town Hall)

Minutes respectfully submitted by: *Harry A. Mink*, Clerk of EDC