

EDC Minutes – 18 October 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Chris Pappas, Dave Clough, David Didriksen, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Jeoff Hall, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Missing: none

Preliminaries

- There were no members of the public in attendance.
- The meetings from the 4 October 2012 meeting were approved.

Tea Distribution

Elliot Johnson requested that his appearance at an EDC meeting be delayed so that he could deliver background information to committee members beforehand. He will appear at the 1 November 2012 meeting.

There was a brief discussion to provide context. Mr Johnson's company is located on Craig Road, an area that is zoned light industrial. This zoning category excludes distribution but, for some reason, one of Mr Johnson's activities has been called distribution.

It seems that there is a mismatch between the distribution restriction and this particular application of the restriction. The topic will be more fully discussed at the 1 November 2012 meeting.

Axe Brothers Update

Derrick Chin provided an update on the issues raised by Jacob and Charles Abrahams (Axe Brothers Tree Service & Land Clearing).

- Jacob and Charles attended the most recent Planning Board meeting.
- The bylaw is being rewritten.
- Derrick mentioned EDC support for bylaw changes and for Axe Brothers to continue operations while the issue is being resolved.

In the discussion that followed, the role of the EDC in this issue was raised. (This question was a natural lead into the goals discussion that followed.) We agreed that the EDC plays the role of ombudsman in issues like this.

Action: Derrick Chin will investigate whether Axe Brothers can continue its business while the issue is being resolved. In particular ...

- Derrick will contact Jacob and Charles Abrahams.
- Derrick will contact Scott Mutch.

Action: The EDC (Nancy Dinkel) will send a letter of support to Jacob and Charles Abrahams. This letter will recommend that firewood be explicitly excluded in the zoning bylaws that restrict storage of home heating fuel.

Transition Conversation

Although there was an explicit agenda item to discuss goals for the EDC, the conversation seemed to move gradually from Axe Brothers (a specific issue) to more general business issues and finally to EDC goals.

In the course of this conversation, there was a clarification from a previous meeting about HDC and its proposed changes to signing bylaws. We thought that these changes had been completed. This turned out to be a premature conclusion.

Action: Dick Calandrella will contact HDC RE the current state of their proposed changes to signing bylaws.

A second conversation focused on current and future plans for Kelley's Corner.

- Kelley's Corner is one of the focuses for the Acton 2020 Committee.
- Does EDC have a role in the development of Kelley's Corner?
 - We agreed that this lies outside the areas of focus for EDC.

Goals (for EDC)

We spent some time in the first of several conversations about goals for the EDC. Rather than attempt to recreate the conversation, these minutes will simply capture action items and important points from the conversation.

We had a brief conversation about the difference between goals (strategic statements) and activities that further one or more goals.

Earlier Work

Several veteran members of the committee observed that a lot of good work was done along these same lines several years ago and it would make sense to use this earlier work as a starting point rather than starting all over.

Dave Clough found references to this earlier work in meeting notes from 29 January 2009. This suggests that the earlier work took place in the latter part of 2008.

Action: Nancy Dinkel will contact Kristen Alexander about written records of this earlier work. Kristen Alexander was the liaison to the EDC from the Planning Department at the time.

Action: Ann Chang and Doug Tindal will look at their archives and distribute relevant material to the rest of the committee.

Action: Once this material is assembled and distributed, each member will review it in preparation for our next discussion of EDC goals.

Sample Goals and Activities

Some of these items are goals and some are specific activities in support of one or more goals.

Communication

Communication was a recurring theme.

- Town Hall will inform the EDC when new businesses come to town.
- Ensure excellent communication between the Planning Department and other groups who can influence the development of real estate in town.

In the middle of discussing improved communication, we made a request that does not need to wait for future discussions about EDC goals.

- **Motion:** The EDC requests that a representative from the Planning Department (the director or a delegate) meet with the EDC once per quarter to report on new business development
 - The motion passed unanimously.

EDC as Expediter

Dave Clough observed that there are many challenges to opening a business. He suggested two goals for EDC.

- Make it easier to start a business in Acton.
- Support existing businesses.

Additional Goals

- Install sewers in West Acton

Items from Earlier Meetings

Review Ease-of-Doing Business

Derrick Chin reported on a meeting with Scott Mutch about the simple steps for obtaining a sign. Scott suggested that we create two plans. The committee felt that this was adding additional delay.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30.