

# EDC Minutes – 17 January 2013

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 17 January 2013 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Ann Chang, Chris Pappas, Dave Clough, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Larry Kenah

Missing: Allan Gulliver, David Didriksen, Doug Tindal, Nancy Dinkel

Minutes from the meeting of 3 January 2013 were approved.

## Acton 2020 Updates

After meeting with the EDC in December, the Acton 2020 met with FinCom in January. The consensus is that they are being asked the same questions in each forum.

The Acton 2020 plan is to ask the town for \$277k to develop and partly implement a plan for Kelley's Corner. This plan will be a critical part of their application to MassWorks for an approximately \$3M grant. Dave reported feedback from several interested parties to the Acton 2020 approach.

- Rich Maddox recommended that Acton 2020 spend the money, even in the absence of answers to all of the questions that are being asked.
  - Dave Clough mentioned that Rich and Vinnie Cutone have had informal meetings individually with some Selectmen to talk indirectly about their plans for the land behind the bowling alley and the two banks located on Massachusetts Avenue.
- Edens, owner of most of the plazas in the northeast quadrant of Kelley's Corner (Roche Bros. Plaza, Middlesex Bank to Acton Wine and Spirit, and Village Cleaners in the "granite" building) also recommended spending the money.

The thinking behind their recommendations is that the spending will show interest and will encourage additional spending on the part of the owners of some of the other land parcels that make up Kelley's Corner.

Here are some additional items related to the Acton 2020 plan.

- Last year, MassWorks had approximately 130 applicants. They awarded approximately \$30 M to 20 recipients.
- In order to "play in the game", Acton 2020 must produce what is referred to as a 25% plan. The \$277k request will go toward creating this plan.
- This request is not a separate warrant article but is rather a line item in the town manager's budget.

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This last observation led to a discussion about whether any aspects of Acton 2020's plans and next steps will be discussed at town meeting.

## **Agenda Items**

### **Acton Town Hall Customer Service**

- There is no single point of contact for people who want to start a business in Acton.
- The first step is to create a "front desk" on the left hand side of the first floor of town hall similar to what has been created on the right hand side.
- This work cannot start until the documents that fill many filing cabinets are either scanned or discarded.

The committee decided to see what it can do to make starting a new business in Acton a little easier while everyone waits for the customer service desk to appear. A subcommittee was created to explore the various steps required to start a business. Subcommittee members are Dick Calandrella, Dave Clough, and Larry Kenah. In order to learn more about what really happens, the subcommittee will take several approaches including the following.

- Visit key departments in town hall and ask them about how each department works with new businesses
- Follow a small number of applicants as they make their way through the various departments for approval, permits, and the like
- Talk with recent "alumni" of the process to find out what worked and what created annoyances or more serious problems

### **HDC Sign Bylaw Progress**

Dick Calandrella will attend the next HDC meeting on 22 January 2013 and report back to the committee.

### **Spruce Street Café**

- The owner is back in Virginia on personal business.
- Her husband is currently running the café.
- Everything seems to have settled down, especially after the holidays.

There is nothing more that the EDC can do here.

### **2013 Goals**

Dick Calandrella will discuss how we want to approach this agenda item with Nancy Dinkel when she returns.

### **Marketing Survey**

The only comment on this item was to identify Nancy Dinkel as the point person for this topic.

### **Ease of Doing Business**

The committee will look to the subcommittee described earlier in these minutes to move forward on this issue.

Derrick Chin has succeeded in creating a three-fold pamphlet called "Quick Reference Guide to Obtaining a Business Sign Permit/License". Several members of the committee picked up one of these pamphlets as we were leaving the building. Kudos to Derrick.

### **Electronic Business Directory**

The only comment on this item was to identify Larry Kenah as the person who will pick up the work that was advanced by Jeoff Hall before he left the EDC.

### **In Closing**

Derrick Chin observed that there is a citizens' petition to allow drive through access to all businesses in Acton, not restricted to banks.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05.