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EDC Minutes – 19 June 2014

These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 19 June 2014 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Dick Calandrella.

Present: Chris Pappas, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Larry Kenah

Not Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Franny Osman, Nancy Dinkel

Kenneth Zhou attended his second EDC meeting. He is thinking about joining the EDC and was at the meeting to observe. David Foley, another prospective EDC member also attended the meeting.

Public Participation (1)

Dick Calandrella provided a report on a meeting with Matthias Rosenfeld who is directing the building activity in West Acton.

- The first floor will be dedicated to commercial real estate.
- The upper floors will consist of office space and public meeting space.
- There will be ample parking in a parking garage, behind the buildings, and on the street.

Dick has invited Mathias to attend a future EDC meeting and fill us in on his plans.

Two issues related to economic development surfaced during this discussion.

- The wooden sign requirement enforced by the Historic District Commission is not well understood and imposes costs on businesses located in historic districts. The EDC needs to revisit this requirement.
- Sewers in West Acton would allow more flexibility in prospective business tenants in this building and throughout West Acton.

Committee Business (2)

Minutes from the 5 June 2014 meeting were approved with one minor edit.

Board of Selectmen Report (3) and Goals (5)

Doug Tindal and Derrick Chin reported on their visit to a recent BoS meeting to talk about membership on the EDC and related topics. The visit was prompted by the VCC informing us that there were four volunteers interested in joining the EDC.

The VCC also pointed out that the “official” roster for the EDC listed two members from the BoS. At the BoS meeting, all agreed that we did not need a second BoS member and that position could be changed into a non-affiliated member. The discussion expanded to include the role of the EDC, most recently defined in a “reboot” effort in 2008.

In summarizing the discussion, Doug Tindal provided some background from the 2008 effort.

- The EDC needs strong support from both the Board of Selectmen and from Town Hall.
- One way to provide this support was through two BoS members.
 - It is unlikely that, with increased duties for each member of the BoS, that this is a reasonable request.
- Other EDC members with other affiliations include the following.
 - Representative from FinCom (currently Doug Tindal)
 - Representative from Planning Board (currently Derrick Chin)
 - Two representatives from the Chamber of Commerce (currently Nancy Dinkel and Chris Pappas)

The BoS concluded that the EDC needs another reboot. We (the EDC) need to answer the following questions.

- What is the mission and what are the goals of the EDC?
- What projects will we undertake to realize these goals?
- What support do we need from the BoS, from other town committees, and from staff members of various town departments in order to complete these projects?
- In light of these updated goals and projects, what roster of EDC members makes sense?
 - Is the existing roster adequate or are small changes needed?

Doug Tindal provided some background from 2008 as a starting point for this effort. He also indicated that he would provide access to additional documents that were available electronically.

We realized that putting together our response to these questions will fully occupy us for the next three or four months.

Acton 2020 Update (4)

Larry Kenah provided an update on the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee meeting that took place on 11 June 2014.

Review of Existing Conditions (item 2 on agenda)

A series of slides examined the properties in Kelley's Corner from several perspectives.

- Ownership
- Pedestrian usage
- Vehicle circulation
- Parking capacity
- Drainage
- Sewers

The increased presence of national chains reflects trends seen throughout the region.

CVS and chains like it will pay dearly for the right location.

Overview of Preliminary Alternatives (item 3)

Land Use

At an earlier meeting, we explored the pieces of Kelley's Corner from the perspective of Susceptibility to Change. At this meeting, we discussed the challenges associated with the K-Mart property owned by Stop&Shop as well as the Baker Oil and Verizon properties, all of which make up the southwest quadrant of Kelley's Corner.

Traffic Alternatives

We discussed two possible infrastructure changes. One would have a small impact on traffic but would help pedestrians. The second would decrease some of the congestion in and through Kelley's corner. We will discuss these and other infrastructure proposals in future meetings.

Remaining Agenda Items

There were no updates on agenda items #6 through #9.

Upcoming Meetings (10)

We agreed to cancel the 3 July 2014 EDC meeting because it would have taken place at the start of a long holiday weekend.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk