

EDC Minutes – 7 August 2014

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. This meeting took place on 7 August 2014 in Room 204 of the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Nancy Dinkel.

There was no public participation.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Ann Chang, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Franny Osman, Ken Zhou, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not Present: Chris Pappas, Derrick Chin

Visitors: Bharat Shah, David Foley

This was a special meeting with a single agenda item, Mission and Goals for the EDC.

David Foley and Bharat Shah, prospective EDC members, also attended the meeting.

Meeting Minutes (2)

Minutes from several previous EDC meetings were approved. These include 19 June, 17 July, and 24 July (special meeting).

Board of Selectmen Report (3)

Franny Osman's report led to several discussions of topics related to economic development.

People are thinking about a possible meals tax in Acton. The rate, while small, would provide additional revenue to the town. Some committee members did not think that such a tax was a good idea.

We again discussed sewers in West Acton. (Franny has previously indicated that one of the BoS goals for the coming year is to develop a schedule for sewers in West Acton.)

- Active sewers are expensive. They should be exposed to lots of homes to spread the costs.
- Sewers along Mass Ave through the wetlands might allow additional homes to be built. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
- What are the unintended consequences of sewers in West Acton?

This discussion led to a general discussion about commercial land vs residential land. The committee struggled to understand why a ratio of something like 85-15 was better for the town than the current 89-11. With the same tax rates for both commercial land and residential land, what are the differences? The answer seems to lie in the fact that businesses generate fewer costs than residences.

Acton 2020 Update (4)

There was no report from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee. Larry Kenah reported on the most recent KCSC meeting at an earlier EDC meeting.

Mission and Goals (5)

Role of the EDC

The EDC is an all-volunteer committee with no budget. As such, it must focus its efforts.

- The EDC is a facilitator.
- It can help to remove obstacles for existing and new businesses.
- It also acts as an ombudsman who can help with grievances.

Mission Statement

Much of the meeting was spent talking about the mission and goals of the EDC. This discussion also included several important projects that the EDC should either sponsor or execute itself. At the end of the discussion, the committee agreed on a mission statement for the EDC.

EDC Mission Statement

A thriving business community is essential to the future of Acton.

To that end, the Economic Development Committee will:

- Help attract, retain, and grow businesses and jobs in Acton and improve the economic environment
- Help increase the value and desirability of our community by supporting the needs of the current commercial and industrial businesses
- Promote the appropriate development, redevelopment, and renewal of commercial property

Goals

The primary agenda item for the next EDC meeting will be to create a set of goals that support the mission statement.

Remaining Agenda Items (6..9)

There were no updates on agenda items 6 through 9. Work on these projects will be clarified after we go through the detailed discussion of EDC mission, goals, and projects.

Upcoming Meetings (10)

The next meeting will be the regularly scheduled meeting on 21 August 2014.

Dick Calandrella confirmed that Mathias Rosenfeld will attend the 18 September 2014 EDC meeting to describe the 525 Mass Ave project in West Acton. Several committee members will take a tour of the West Acton site on Friday, 22 August 2014.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk