

Committee Members

Zachary Knowlton, Chair
Khalid Abdi, Vice Chair
Richard Di Iulio, Member
Mark Schultz, Member
Cassandra McKenzie, Member
Jennifer Kendall, Member
Liam McDermott, Member



TOWN OF MEDWAY COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Sanford Hall

Medway Town Hall

155 Village Street, Medway

Members Present: Zach Knowlton, Chair, Khalid Abdi, Vice Chair, Mark Schultz, Rich Di Iulio, Jennifer Kendall, Cassandra McKenzie

Member Absent: Liam McDermott

Also Present:

Barbara J. Saint Andre, Director, Community and Economic Development
Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

Chair Knowlton opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

New Business

Assistance to business owners affected by COVID-19 emergency

Ms. McKenzie stated Westborough EDC receives grants to provide to small businesses and questioned how they received these funds. Ms. Saint Andre stated she will research this.

Discussion on potential brew pub pop up event

Members suggested Ms. McKenzie investigate breweries closer to Medway to introduce them to the Medway crowd. Ms. McKenzie began looking into a brewery in Franklin. Some of the other members suggested that we tie this event to another event to ensure a crowd. The event could be coupled with artists, food trucks, bands, etc. Ms. McKenzie mentioned they could partner with another event Medway has going on, possibly in April or May. Chair Knowlton stated Mr. McDermott was interested in assisting with this.

Ms. Saint Andre suggested another restaurant week in the spring. She will reach out to the Medway Business Council to follow up on this. Ms. Saint Andre asked if the brew pub pop-up is contemplated as a one-day event or multiple day event. Ms. Kendall suggested keeping it to one day event to keep it simpler and more streamlined. Ms. McKenzie stated her resource said that they did a multiple day festival, and they utilized many different sources to assist.

Ms. Saint Andre mentioned she can start looking into information on the days of celebrations. She stated if the committee goes forward with this event, we will need all members to work on one of the aspects of the event.

Reports

Update on Cultural Council Initiatives

Ms. Kendall stated the artist spotlight for November is a sculpture artist, very talented. This is posted on the Cultural Council website. She also mentioned there was hoe-down at the Thayer House as well as a concert. Ms. Saint Andre asked if the Cultural Council coordinates with the Council on Aging as they may be looking for Cultural Council events. The Council on Aging is interested in more events, especially at the Oakland Street center.

Master Plan Committee

Ms. McKenzie stated an open house was held on the 3rd of October, continued with an online version to drum up more feedback. She mentioned the MPC has a meeting on Monday. January starts Phase 3 with another series of forums. Cassandra believes the firm that is assisting the Town with the Master Plan is thorough and knowledgeable. They have been keeping the community engaged.

Use of Economic Data

In the past, the Town has utilized data collected by Framingham State and other means. The members recently received data from 495 Metrowest Partnership. The Master Plan will have insightful data that we can leverage. Given the nature of it, obtaining data in a consistent fashion is challenging. Chair Knowlton suggested members keep thinking of ways to find new information and data to help us stay up to date with our data.

Ms. Saint Andre stated this is the time of year that the Select Board holds the meeting to set the tax rate – usually integrating economic data that comes from the Assessor on commercial, industrial, and residential values. This can be compared to past years. Ms. Saint Andre noted that the Assessors' presentation from a previous year had been very helpful and it would be worth reviewing this year's data.

Planning and Economic Development Board (PEDB)

Mr. Di Iulio stated the town meeting was held on Monday night and all zoning articles were adopted. Environmental standards on noise, odor and various other items were passed. Currently the PEDB has the same three projects going on: Medway Place, Rocky's Hardware, and Phytopia. The Board should be finishing up Medway Place. It started working on the decision as this needs to be completed by December 3rd. The Applicant has not participated in the decision process. Phytopia special permits for marijuana cultivating and processing should be complete this week. Mr. Di Iulio is unsure of the status on Rocky's.

Mr. Di Iulio attended a webinar on train, buses, and people – setting up an efficient transit system. Buses need to be considered more than they are now to help get people to where they need to go, such as shopping, work, etc. Mr. Di Iulio mentioned the Town has a shuttle to the Norfolk commuter rail station – this is important. We need something that circulates within the Town that might connect us with other towns to help people get from one place to another.

Chair Knowlton asked about any update on the battery energy storage system issue. Mr. Di Iulio reported that an RFP was put out and they received some feedback, but as of yet, the Town has not hired a consultant. With that, the Town Meeting on Monday voted an 18 month moratorium on battery energy

storage systems (BESS) in the Energy Resource District. The PEDB was tasked in May to have something for the November Town Meeting, but was unable to finalize.

Ms. Saint Andre stated the real estate bar association hosted a webinar on renewable energy recently. Battery energy storage was never on the radar a few years ago, and now something on the magnitude of a 4,000 % increase in battery storage capacity is projected within the next few years. She suggested it is wise to move forward with BESS regulations as these will be a major player within the next few years.

Chair Knowlton questioned the process of knowing if we will receive money from federal infrastructure bill. A member questioned if this will be determined by the State. Mr. Di Iulio would assume it comes from the State as there is no specific project in the works. In Boston, BRT's in a segregated lane is proposed as an effective transit system. Putting buses and trolleys on a private lane increases safety due to boarding and unboarding. Ms. Saint Andre believes the Town tried to obtain funds for the new water treatment plant in the infrastructure bill. The Town is also aggressively improving streets and putting in sidewalks.

The Safe Routes to School Program was mentioned. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned the Town is looking to put in sidewalks from Middle School to Cassidy Lane over to the Elementary school. This is a great project to provide a safer sidewalk for the kids between the two schools.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 21, 2021

On a motion made by Mr. Di Iulio; seconded by Mr. Abdi, the Economic Development Committee voted 5-0-1 to approve the meeting minutes from October 21, 2021.

Next Meeting: December 16, 2021

On a motion made by Ms. McKenzie; seconded by Mr. Abdi, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

Edited by
Barbara J. Saint Andre, Director
Community and Economic Development