

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, May 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's Orders imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, no in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted at this meeting. Information for participating via Zoom was posted at the end of the Agenda on the town website. All persons participated remotely in the meeting via Zoom

Members Present (virtually): Zach Knowlton, Chair; Mark Schultz, Cassandra McKenzie, Rich Di Iulio, Jennifer Kendall, Liam McDermott

Member Absent: Khalid Abdi, Vice Chair

Also Present (virtually):

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

Chair Knowlton opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. Members announced themselves when the meeting began.

New Business

Update on Cultural Council Initiatives

Ms. Kendall provided updates on the Cultural Council initiatives. She mentioned the Council is working on "Signs of Spring" Photo Contest, and also that the signs were approved for the Bridge Project. Ms. Kendall stated there is Art in Choate Park on June 17th. Pixie Project is scheduled for July 24th and 25th. Ms. Kendall mentioned she will no longer be on the Cultural Council – she plans to be more involved in the Makerspace. She also mentioned she attended a focus group on Arts and Culture for the Master Plan.

Assistance to business owners affected by COVID-19 emergency

Mr. Di Iulio questioned if outdoor dining would go away when the state of emergency is lifted. Ms. Saint Andre stated it will end 60 days after the State of Emergency is lifted. She mentioned the Select Board further extended it to October 30th. The Select Board also discussed making adjustments to the zoning bylaws to make it easier for restaurants to establish permanent outdoor dining.

Spring Events and Restaurant Week Update

Chair Knowlton stated positive feedback was received from Restaurant Week. Businesses appreciated it. You can view comments on Social Media. EDC and Medway Business Council are open to collaborating on an event like this in the future again.

Mr. McDermott asked if there was a list of businesses that have closed or lots with vacancies. There is a link on the EDC website that shows commercial vacancies in the area. We need to constantly refresh this data. Ms. Saint Andre stated there is nothing formal as to a list of closed businesses. A lot of businesses are tucked away outside of the large plazas. The members discussed re-starting the initiative of reaching out owners of commercial properties with available spaces to offer assistance as the Pandemic ends. Ms. Kendall suggested a holiday shopping guide for people to promote the stores in Medway. Positive news: Rocky's Ace Hardware is renting the three commercial spaces at the end of Medway Place- grand opening is June 10th.

Discussion of Business Resource Guide

Ms. Saint Andre stated the expression of interest for the grant application was submitted. She is currently working on the full application. She mentioned this is one of a number applications the Town is submitting. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned she has a Zoom call scheduled for Monday with Source Link. Source Link prepared the Easthampton Business Resource Guide.

Follow up on May 10, 2021 Annual Town Meeting warrant articles of interest to the EDC

Ms. Saint Andre mentioned all of the zoning articles supported by EDC and the Planning and Economic Development Board (PEDB) passed. She stated that, with respect to the citizen petition for a moratorium on battery storage, the final motion brought forward only included the request for PEDB to review and report by October 15th, with recommendations on zoning changes for November Town Meeting. PEDB is going to follow up on that. Moratorium was not in the motion presented. Also, under the Central Business District zoning that was passed, food trucks and other temporary use in parking lots is allowed by special permit by the PEDB in the Central Business District.

Reports

Master Plan Committee

Ms. McKenzie mentioned the first community forum is Monday at 7:00 p.m. Participants need to register beforehand. She mentioned 60 people are registered as of Monday. Ms. McKenzie stated the focus group for economic development was eye opening. Several business owners attended, and participants were vocal. They mentioned it is hard for them to find tenants. They also mentioned they need parking for people to access their businesses. Chair Knowlton stated to continue to note key takeaways to help the business community further.

Mr. Di Iulio stated he had technical difficulties and was unable to attend the Transportation Focus Group. He is hoping they had a robust discussion. He forwarded some notes to the Focus Group that he made in preparation for the meeting.

Use of Economic Data

Mr. Abdi is researching this. Chair Knowlton stated they would push this to the next meeting. Chair Knowlton mentioned Norton received high level data. Key takeaway, communities finding access to these reports. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned as part of the Master Plan process, public information will be gathered in regard to economic data.

Planning and Economic Development Board

Mr. Di Iulio stated they are working on a couple projects. Medway Place, Medway Mills, and the Settlement mixed use development. The zoning updates might spur more development within the Central Business District.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 15, 2021

On a motion made by Ms. McKenzie; seconded by Mr. McDermott, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the meeting minutes from April 15, 2021.

Zach Knowlton	Aye
Rich Di Iulio	Aye
Cassandra McKenzie	Aye
Mark Schultz	Aye
Jennifer Kendall	Aye
Liam McDermott	Aye

Governor Baker has issued an updated order that the State of Emergency will be lifted as of June 15th. The mask mandate for vaccinated individuals and most other restrictions are lifted on May 29th. Public meetings will be held in person. The next EDC meeting will be back in Sanford Hall. Non-vaccinated individuals are to wear a mask. Vaccinated people have the option.

Next Meeting: June 20, 2021

On a motion made by Mr. Di Iulio; seconded by Ms. McKenzie, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 7:47 p.m.

Zach Knowlton	Aye
Cassandra McKenzie	Aye
Rich Di Iulio	Aye
Mark Schultz	Aye
Jennifer Kendall	Aye
Liam McDermott	Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

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