

## Committee Members

Zachary Knowlton, Chairman

Khalid Abdi, Vice Chair

Richard Di Iulio, Member

Mark Schultz, Member

Cassandra McKenzie, Member



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# TOWN OF MEDWAY COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Minutes

**Thursday, December 17, 2020 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, Khalid Abdi, Mark Schultz, Cassandra McKenzie

**Members Absent:** Rich Di Iulio

### **Also Present (virtually):**

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

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

Chair Knowlton opened the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Members announced themselves when the meeting began.

### **New Business**

#### **Assistance to business owners affected by COVID-19 emergency**

Ms. Saint Andre had a conversation with Julie Dennehy of the Medway Business Council regarding ideas to assist restaurants. Two ideas- Restaurant Week and 21-day promotion. Ms. Saint Andre posed the question to Ms. Dennehy whether the 21-day promotion would be for just restaurants or also retail. Ms. Dennehy agreed it should be broadened beyond the restaurants. She envisions Medway Business Council handling the 21-day promotion, as they have a budget for the prizes. EDC can help promote it.

Ms. Dennehy would like to do this in January and February, as January and February are slower months in restaurants and retail. She would like to partner with us on this. She has asked if one member of the EDC could be a point person to help coordinate with local restaurants and stores to get ideas. Ms. Saint Andre told Ms. Dennehy that EDC would do whatever it can to help.

Chair Knowlton suggested we have a liaison to assist Medway Business Council by contacting local restaurants, gathering promotion ideas, etc. Chair Knowlton offered his assistance and Ms. McKenzie offered to help Chair Knowlton, if needed. Ms. McKenzie had previously forwarded

information on Fall River's Restaurant Week to provide an idea.

### **Discussion of goals for 2021**

Ms. Saint Andre shared 2020 goals with the committee members. Members decided to only briefly review goals, as Mr. Di Iulio was not in attendance.

Ms. McKenzie questioned the permitting process and how the committee could get more involved to help simplify permitting for local businesses. Chair Knowlton clarified that the committee was hearing from business owners who are frustrated in the process of approval to get a permit. Ms. Saint Andre stated the EDC updated the Business Guide two years ago to help guide small businesses in the permitting process. Some of the approval process is mandated by the state. Ms. Saint Andre stated EDC can ask the Planning and Economic Development Board (PEDB) to look at changing the Town zoning as to which businesses need additional local approvals. Under our zoning, certain plans require site plan approval which requires going in front of the PEDB. The State also allows the Town to offer expedited permitting. Ms. Saint Andre believes Medway has adopted this for the West Business Park. The Business Guide tries to clear up the process. The Town tries to assist everyone the best they can.

Chair Knowlton stated we should model our process to match the surrounding towns. For example, food trucks are allowed in Bellingham and Milford. Try to make it more business friendly. Ms. McKenzie stated the under-utilized parking lots came up at the meeting on the Central Business zoning district.

Chair Knowlton recalled the event from last fall at Choate Park, celebrating the conclusion of Route 109 work. The businesses appreciated it. Chair Knowlton stated when COVID is over, Medway should have another type of "re-opening" event.

Ms. McKenzie shared her feedback from the community zoning meeting regarding the Central Business District. She stated the meeting was well attended by developers.

Ms. Saint Andre stated the Master Plan had been put on hold, but this is now going forward and will provide a lot of input on economic development and land use for the entire town. Ms. Saint Andre stated the zoning needs to be updated and hopefully the food trucks will be part of the process. Ms. McKenzie suggests working with the Cultural Council to have some type of pop-up event in the late summer or early fall in Medway Plaza. Hopefully this would generate more business in that area.

Mr. Schultz mentioned every time he drives by the Plaza, there seems to be more and more vacancies. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned COVID is part of this.

Mr. Knowlton stated tactical steps for 2021 projects will need to be updated.

### **Central Business zoning district – input on potential Zoning By-law changes**

Ms. McKenzie reported that, at the community meeting, Mr. Brovitz showed many possibilities for the Central Business District. The Town needs to determine what it wants. This will inform on what zoning to have in place and will help see the changes that can be made. Ms. Saint Andre emailed with Mr. Brovitz after the meeting. He is working to get proposed zoning amendments to the Town in early January. Ms. Saint Andre will forward these when she receives them. Mr. Brovitz reached out to a lot of the business owners.

At November Town Meeting, there were minor zoning adjustments made to Central Business District. Previously, mixed use did not allow development to have one or more building used solely for residential. The Town is hiring a consultant to assist with the Master Plan as it is a huge undertaking. Ms. Saint Andre stated they are hoping to release the RFP for the consultant at the beginning of January. Ms. Saint Andre stated they will potentially create a Master Plan Committee which will include representatives from boards and citizens at large. There will be a lot of public input sessions as there are 8 or 9 areas being reviewed. Part of the process will be to have sessions on each of these areas for citizens to provide input.

**Cultural Council & EDC Involvement**

Ms. Saint Andre stated the Cultural Council has a lot of initiatives going on. She stated they are currently working with Medway Place shopping center for potential window art or murals. They were open to the idea. They are also interested in providing assistance in the Restaurant Week.

**Reports**

**Use of Economic Data**

Data was stored at a University to provide analytics on the communities. It closed over the summer, so the last report we received is the last one we will have. Chair Knowlton is working with 495/MetroWest Partnership to see if there will be new data. He is proactively reaching out. Mr. Knowlton is also reaching out to surrounding towns to see what their EDC initiatives are to assist the businesses currently. Ms. Saint Andre stated the Master Plan process will generate a large collection of data. She hopes that during this process, we will be able to get some robust data regarding the Town. The 2020 Census has also been completed. These numbers should be coming out early 2021 to hopefully provide us some updated data.

**Planning and Economic Development Board**

Mr. Di Iulio was not able to attend the meeting. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned Medway Place and Medway Mill Site Plan are still being reviewed.

**Minutes Approval November 19, 2020**

On a motion made by Mr. Abdi; seconded by Ms. McKenzie, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the minutes of November 19, 2020.

<b>Zach Knowlton</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Khalid Abdi</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Cassandra McKenzie</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mark Schultz</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Next meeting: January 21, 2021**

On a motion made by Ms. McKenzie; seconded by Mr. Schultz, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

<b>Zach Knowlton</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Khalid Abdi</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Cassandra McKenzie**      **Aye**  
**Mark Schultz**          **Aye**

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

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

List of Documents Reviewed

EDC Mission Statement and Goals, 2020

## REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE FOR 2020

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) works proactively to promote, encourage, and facilitate the development of responsible and properly planned business and industrial growth within the community in order to expand and strengthen the local economy and diversify the community's tax base.

Membership is comprised of diverse individuals who either reside or work in Medway and are appointed by the Planning and Economic Development Board. Members in 2020 included: Zachary Knowlton, Chair, Khalid Abdi, Vice-Chair, Richard Di Iulio, Cassandra McKenzie, Mark Schultz, and Keith Peden (since resigned). The Committee typically meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. The Committee is staffed by the Director of Community & Economic Development, Barbara J. Saint Andre.

The year 2020 was a challenging year for the local business community due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in emergency orders from the Governor closing most businesses in March. While the local economy slowly reopened as the emergency orders were lifted through a phased-in reopening process, many businesses have continued to face economic headwinds. As a result, the EDC shifted its focus to providing assistance during the pandemic, including:

- Assisting local restaurants through the process of obtaining approval from the Board of Selectmen for temporary outdoor dining areas to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 indoor dining restrictions.
- Posting regular updates on the EDC webpage with the latest information regarding available COVID-19 grants and assistance programs for businesses.
- Collaborating with the Medway Business Council, local businesses, and town officials to encourage residents to support local businesses.
- Promoting responsible economic growth through EDC Member Cassandra McKenzie's representative role in the Central Business District Zoning review, in which the Town is exploring zoning amendments to facilitate business growth and prosperity in the Central Business District.

Furthermore, the EDC continuously works to:

- Grow Medway's commercial tax base.
- Eliminate bottlenecks in the permitting process to further strengthen Medway's reputation as a business-friendly community.
- Engage the community by enhancing the content on the EDC website and communicating directly with other town committees.
- Identify funding sources that can be applied to the community's economic development.

As we look toward 2021, the EDC remains intently focused on the health of the local business community and how the EDC can partner with businesses and constituents to facilitate improved economic outcomes. Our local businesses and residents are the lifeblood of Medway

and we remain optimistic about the strength and resiliency of our community to not only weather the pandemic, but to come out stronger than ever.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Knowlton  
Economic Development Committee Chair