

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, January 21, 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, Khalid Abdi, Mark Schultz, Cassandra McKenzie, Rich Di Iulio, Jennifer Kendall

Also Present (virtually):

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

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

Liam McDermott, Potential New Member

Chair Knowlton opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Members announced themselves when the meeting began.

New Business

Introduction of New Member

Jennifer Kendall has returned to the Economic Development Committee. Chair Knowlton thanked Jennifer and welcomed her back.

Review Annual Report for 2020

Chair Knowlton asked for feedback regarding the Annual Report. Mr. Di Iulio stated it was very well written and concise. Khalid agreed it looks very good and sees no changes. Ms. McKenzie and Mr. Schultz stated no additional comments. Chair Knowlton thanked Ms. Saint Andre for her assistance with this assignment.

On a motion made by Mr. Di Iulio; seconded by Mr. Abdi, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Annual Report for 2020.

Zach Knowlton **Aye**

Khalid Abdi **Aye**

Richard Di Iulio **Aye**

Mark Schultz **Aye**

Cassandra McKenzie **Aye**

Jennifer Kendall **Aye**

Update on Cultural Council Initiatives

Ms. Kendall stated there are two potential areas that the EDC could assist the Cultural Council with. The Cultural Council has started an Artist Spotlight Series with a video spotlight each month. The goal of this series is to highlight many talented artists right here in Medway. They are also looking to bring art to business areas such as Medway Commons. They are considering a 2-hour exhibition of art on easels or in store windows. Ms. McKenzie asked if the Council reached out to the State for funding. The Cultural Council is working on grants from the Mass Cultural Council.

Ms. Saint Andre offered her assistance in anyway and mentioned she could reach out to businesses. Ms. Saint Andre asked if the Council was seeking to be involved in Restaurant Week.

Goals for 2021

Chair Knowlton stated the Goals were reviewed during the last meeting. Mr. Di Iulio was unable to attend that meeting and Chair Knowlton asked if Mr. Di Iulio had any comments or questions. Mr. Di Iulio mentioned “Medway Plaza” is now Medway Place. Mr. Abdi suggested adding a footer with the date in which the Goals were updated to keep track of changes and last review date. Ms. Saint Andre stated she could make the changes to the document.

On a motion made by Mr. Di Iulio; seconded by Mr. Abdi, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Economic Development Committees Goals for 2021.

Zach Knowlton	Aye
Khalid Abdi	Aye
Richard Di Iulio	Aye
Mark Schultz	Aye
Cassandra McKenzie	Aye
Jennifer Kendall	Aye

Assistance to business owners affected by COVID-19 emergency

Mr. Di Iulio mentioned the 9:30 p.m. curfew ends on Monday, January 25, 2021. The 25% capacity limitation remains intact.

Chair Knowlton mentioned the Medway Business Council started the 21-day raffle on January 11th and it has been going well. Townspeople have been submitting their receipts and are entered into a raffle to win a gift card. The Medway Business Council is looking to host a Restaurant Week during the last week of February. The Medway Business Council will partner with restaurants in Town to offer specials to entice people to spend money on the businesses in Town.

Ms. Kendall mentioned Franklin offers a program, ThinkFranklinFirst, the program allows persons to purchase a gift card to use at many stores and restaurants throughout the Town. This helps boost the local economy. Mr. Di Iulio stated they should see if Medway Business Council would like to partner up on something like this. Ms. Saint Andre stated she would find out more information about this.

Ms. Kendall mentioned the possibility of cross collaborating with cultural food by having restaurants pick an art-inspired dish. The Council is interested in talking more about culinary arts.

Ms. Saint Andre mentioned they are searching for ways in which they could approach individual

businesses to see if there was anything EDC could help with, such as obtaining for outdoor dining approval. There are questions if the businesses that did not take advantage of outdoor dining did not have the space, the knowledge, etc. EDC wants to make it known that they are available to help.

Chair Knowlton mentioned conducting an Outreach Poll to gain ideas businesses may have to make things better. They can possibly discover common themes or creative ideas. Mr. Di Iulio mentioned Medway Animal Hospital is looking to relocate and there are not many places in town zoned for animal hospitals.

Chair Knowlton asked for volunteers to reach out to businesses. Ms. McKenzie and Mr. Abdi volunteered, in addition to Chair Knowlton. Mr. Di Iulio suggested taking an inventory on open restaurants again.

Ms. Saint Andre suggested sending out a formal email from her email with a few questions, then forwarding them on to Mr. Abdi or Ms. McKenzie for further discussion. An alternative would be to split the list between Mr. Abdi and Ms. McKenzie being the first contact with the business. Mr. Di Iulio stated to start with the restaurants and then expand to personal services or another segment of the business community. Chair Knowlton questioned if the Medway Business Council has a contact list for businesses. Chair Knowlton stated they could create a short survey monkey to get a general feeling of how the businesses are doing. Chair Knowlton mentioned a Town of Montague video of businesses in Town to promote availability and safety during the pandemic. Ms. Saint Andre stated she would speak to Sandy Johnston – Communications Director. The publicity of how businesses are handling COVID and their safety protocols could increase foot traffic.

Business Resource Guide

Ms. Saint Andre shared Easthampton's Business Resource Guide. The resource guide's goal is to assist local businesses start up or existing businesses to expand. The city received a grant, and hired a consultant to put together a chart that has a list of local resources available to local businesses. A lot of resources are in the area, not necessarily in the city. This is a business resource guide for local businesses in the area that can help them start up or grow. Mr. Di Iulio believes its worth pursuing. Ms. Saint Andre stated there may be other grant programs out there that Medway could apply for in order to create something similar.

Reports

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

Ms. McKenzie stated the Planning and Economic Development Board is continuing to work diligently on this.

Use of Economic Data

Chair Knowlton stated the data is readily available, a contact is just needed to share the information. Ms. Saint Andre mentioned she has joined the Board of Directors of 495/Metro West Partnership. Ms. Saint Andre stated she will encourage them to do what they can to update this. Chair Knowlton stated he would be interested in speaking to them to pick through reports.

Planning and Economic Development Board

Mr. Di Iulio mentioned the RFP for the Master Plan consultant has gone out. Ms. Saint Andre stated there are a large number of inquiries from interested firms. The Planning and Economic Development Board is

still working on Medway Place, Medway Mills, and the Central Business District, as well as other changes to zoning by law. They are very active in getting drafts written by February 11th for the articles.

Ms. Saint Andre mentioned the Town is constantly reviewing the permitting process to find ways to simplify it. Ms. Saint Andre stated they are looking for specific ideas to lessen the permit and approval process. Mr. Di Iulio mentioned the Planning and Economic Development Board has an opportunity at beginning of each meeting for citizens’ comments, and they are always open to listen to residents and members of the public. Mr. Di Iulio stated it would be beneficial to have more public feedback.

Minutes Approval December 17, 2020

Mr. Di Iulio suggested updating Medway Plaza to Medway Place.

On a motion with one correction made by Mr. Di Iulio; seconded by Mr. Abdi, the Economic Development Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the minutes of December 17, 2020.

Zach Knowlton	Aye
Khalid Abdi	Aye
Rich Di Iulio	Aye
Cassandra McKenzie	Aye
Mark Schultz	Aye
Jennifer Kendall	Abstain

Next meeting: February 18, 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 8:38 p.m.

Zach Knowlton	Aye
Khalid Abdi	Aye
Richard Di Iulio	Aye
Cassandra McKenzie	Aye
Mark Schultz	Aye
Jennifer Kendall	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, 2021

Medway Economic Development Committee

January, 2021

Vision Statement:

To facilitate planned economic growth to reduce the escalating impact of supporting the community and its infrastructure by the residential tax payer.

Mission Statement:

To be a positive advocate for planned economic growth in Medway by being a proactive Committee that provides energy and focus on the topic and engages all stakeholders in the discussion.

Long Term Goals:

1. Grow Medway's Commercial tax base from the current 24% in 2019 to 35% in 2029.
2. Work to eliminate bottlenecks in the permitting process and become known as a business friendly community.
3. Engage the community in the discussion by enhancing the EDC website and communicating directly with other town committees.
4. Identify funding sources that can be applied to the community's economic development.

Potential Short Term Tactical Steps for 2021:

1. Collaborate with other Town committees and the business community to support efforts to grow Medway's economic base (e.g., Cultural Council, Medway Business Council, Planning & Economic Development Board).
2. Source, analyze and leverage economic, demographic and industry data from a variety of sources to enhance our decision-making framework while sharing relevant data on the EDC website.
3. Partner with commercial real estate agents, developers and asset owners to enhance our relationships and increase occupancy rates among open commercial space.
4. Develop a relationship with the owner of the Medway Place to develop a plan for further development of the space with enhanced occupancy.
5. Work with the new property owner to understand, partner and influence future plans for the development of the south side of Route 109 opposite Medway Place.
6. Develop an approach to an event that would draw people to Medway and stimulate the growth of our local Medway businesses (e.g. restaurant week).
7. Continue work with our Medway Communications Director to support an integrated communications plan that supports community engagement while marketing Medway as an attractive place to live and do business.
8. Be present at key Medway town government activities as a way to hear the voice of our citizens and to gain a directional indication of future needs of the community and its willingness to embrace change thru Economic Development.
9. Collaborate with the Planning and Economic Development Board and Assessors Department to systematically review parcels of land that could be developed to support the economic growth of our community.