



**TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Meeting Minutes**

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Economic Development Committee

MEETING DATE: 21 May 2020

TIME: 7:30

PLACE: Remote Meeting, Conducted on Zoom

Members Present: Mark White, Dawn Willis, Rich Guzzardi, Kristin Hilberg

Members Absent: Nate McKinley, John Neyland, Joe Ferguson

Other Attendees: Becky Neville (Fin Com)

Summary of discussion of each topic

- Seeing a quorum, Rich Guzzardi called the meeting to order at 7:46.
- Mr. Guzzardi passed on Correspondence and New Business to be revisited
- **Annual Town Meeting**
 - o Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article discussion. Mark White indicated that the two zoning articles recommended by the EDC were placed on the Planning Board Consent Agenda. Mr. White indicated that he believed that the warrant articles do not require a separate presentation, given that the warrant indicates details on the article and that given the current environment the focus is on getting through ATM quickly.
 - o Discussion continued on potential scenarios given the consent agenda and how to be prepared and respond to questions or objections.
- **UMASS Update**
 - o Mr. Guzzardi shared that he had reviewed current status with the Planning Board and that there had been a discussion with Dr. Henry Renski at UMASS
 - o Mr. Guzzardi shared that the discussion with the Planning Board was a productive two way dialogue. Mr. Guzzardi shared that the Planning Board expressed concern about whether or not the community has been sufficiently engaged as part of the process and if the EDC was moving too fast.

- There was then a discussion with UMASS with the Planning Board Chair, EDC Chair, and Mark White to discuss the plan forward given the restrictions placed on us due to COVID-19.
 - Mr. Guzzardi shared the plan forward. UMASS will prepare a voice over of the presentation that was made at the Phase 1 final presentation for us to share with the community. This will be part of educating the town on the work completed. UMASS will also conduct a market assessment of implementation of the business/economic development ideas provided by the EDC. Then, we would hope to conduct a charette in the Fall with the community to get feedback on the work completed. The final step would be preparation of a final report by UMASS
 - Kristin Hilberg shared that there is concern in the real estate market that the commercial properties in the urban areas will potentially see an outflow of tenants due to COVID-19, and that Boxborough may be presented an opportunity given our suburban environment.
 - Discussion by the committee on how to proceed with the study. Mr. White indicate that the Planning Board view was the UMASS Study should proceed as approved by the town and is support of the EDC's efforts.
 - The EDC consensus was to meet again with the Planning Board post-election.
- **Cisco Beaver Brook Campus**
 - Mr. Guzzardi shared that he and the Planning Board chair had discussed setting up a separate forum to focus on the Cisco Beaver Brook Campus. Les Fox, Select Board was contacted and there is a consensus that post-election this idea should be pursued with the Select Board and Planning Board.
- **Business Engagement**
 - Mr. Guzzardi shared that there is a message being prepared to be sent to Boxborough businesses
 - Ms. Willis shared that she is supportive of a communication but it needs to be short and direct.
 - Ms. Hilberg believed it was important to keep the dialogue open.
 - Ms. Willis shared that the Town of Acton has reached out to local businesses and has begun the dialogue about support (tax breaks, etc.). She said it does feel as though they are trying to add value.
 - There was then discussion on what the town could do to provide relief to town businesses.
- **Business Approaches**
 - Mr. Guzzardi shared a presentation of Economic Development Approaches around the idea of Business Enclaves – or clusters of related businesses
 - The presentation identified healthcare, Technology and Agriculture around two specific parcels (Beaver Brook and 1414 Mass Ave)
 - There was then discussion about what the Town of Acton is doing to generate local business activity, and whether or not there should be something done for Boxborough

- There was then a discussion of the challenges that Oscar's Mexican Grill is having with the town given the septic restrictions. He is restricted to 42 seats and that is impacting his ability to expand and implement liquor service under the license he has been granted.
- **Communication with Boxborough Businesses**
 - The consensus was to prepare a communication by the EDC to be submitted to Boxborough businesses to obtain feedback on what may be needed or what support the EDC can provide
- **Next Meeting**
 - Mr. Guzzardi proposed meeting on 4 June ahead of ATM with purpose of discussing what the EDC should be doing for Boxborough post election

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:27 by Mr. Guzzardi. Seconded by Ms. Hilberg.

Hilberg – aye

White – aye

Willis – aye

Guzzardo – aye

List of Exhibits used, if any:

- **Meeting Agenda**
- **Presentation – Economic Development Approaches**