

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Economic Development Committee
MEETING DATE: October 12, 2023
TIME: 7:30 PM
PLACE: Zoom Meeting

Acting chair John Neyland called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

Present: Kristin Hilberg, Abby Reip, Mark White

Ex-Officio Members present: Alec Wade (Town Planner), Becky Neville (Finance Committee liaison)

Cassie LaRussa from Boxborough News was also present

Chair Rich Guzzardi joined via phone at 8:09 p.m.

Member Dawn Willis joined the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Member Marta Andreu joined at 8:46 p.m.

1. Minutes

Kristin Hilberg moved to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2023 meeting. Abby Reip seconded the motion. Motion approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

2. Board Organization

Mark White nominated Rich Guzzardi for Chair. Kristin Hilberg seconded the motion.

Motion approved by 4-0 by roll call vote.

Kristin Hilberg nominated Abby Reip for Clerk. Mark White seconded the motion.

Motion approved by 4-0 by roll call vote.

3. Water Resources Committee Draft RFP Feedback

The Committee discussed their priorities for a comprehensive water study. Among the items mentioned were locating sources, both inside and outside Boxborough, evaluating the need for water considering current and possible future demands considering the Master Plan for future business development, supporting the construction of an aqueduct under the new I-495 bridge for possible future use, assessing the quality of available water. Planner Alec Wade will transmit the EDC's feedback to the Water Resources Committee.

4. Business Grant Program – ARPA Funding Update

Vote to execute an award contract between the Town and Two Friends Chocolate for \$20,000.

The committee reviewed the contract provided by town counsel and had many questions about the excessive insurance requirements.

Rich moved to accept the contract as written with the amendment to the insurance language to say that Two Friends Chocolate will maintain their current insurance coverage as demonstrated for the duration of the contract.

Mark seconded the motion.

Motion approved by 7-0 roll call vote.

Mark White moved to authorize the chairperson (Rich Guzzardi) to sign the contract on behalf of the committee.

Kristin Hilberg seconded the motion.

Motion approved by 7-0 roll call vote.

Alec indicated that there are not any other applications pending, however there is one that is imminent. There is also a prospective applicant with whom he has not yet engaged in conversation.

5. The Park at Beaverbrook Survey

The Planning Board and Planning Office are expecting an application from Campanelli to extend their open space commercial development special permit. This type of permit is a very discretionary permit to the Planning Board. The Planning Board is trying to understand the desires of the community by conducting a public engagement survey with boards and committees of Boxborough. Alec requested that EDC members that serve on the Planning Board (i.e., Rich and Mark) recuse themselves because they will have the opportunity to voice their opinions and act on the special permit application as Planning Board members. Committee went through the survey and came to a consensus on all of the answers.

Kristin moved to authorize Abby to prepare the survey responses as discussed by the committee and submit those responses dated October 12, 2023.

Dawn seconded the motion.

Motion approved by 5-0 roll call vote. Planning Board members Mark White and Rich Guzzardi recused themselves.

The survey responses were recorded and submitted to Alec on October 14, 2023 and can be viewed here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NLgAtZUJDBkfxGi2-2pPiR-TcJ455sC6UzOr4Z7detc/edit?usp=sharing>

6. Boxborough Business Breakfast/Brunch

Kristin, Dawn, and Marta volunteered to help coordinate the breakfast. Alec will send out an RSVP to local business owners for Wednesday, December 6. Time will be determined by the volunteer team.

7. Town Center Grant Project Update

Alec, the town planner, issued a request for qualifications for consulting services and received one proposal from a very qualified applicant. Town counsel has reviewed the response and drawn up a contract. The contract offer has not yet been extended to the consultant. Alec will work with TA Johns to determine if the contract needs authorization from the Select Board. Once the contract has been executed, the consultant, Alec, TA Johns, ATA Hudson, and EDC Chair Rich Guzzardi will meet with the consultant to work out the final scope of work (e.g., the number of public meetings, number of hours of public engagement, etc.).

At the next EDC meeting, Alec will have a scope of work to share with the committee. The project will need one or two EDC members to engage in a working group along with members from other town boards.

8. Business Database Internship Update

Internship approved. Not yet on the website due to a backlog of work.

9. Business District Pop-ups

The committee discussed organizing a pop-up and decided that they were not ready to commit in a short time frame (pre-holiday). However, John suggested that the business breakfast may be an opportunity to gauge local business' thoughts on the concept. Kristin may run a pop-up for her own small business next to Two Friends Chocolate. Will reach out to plaza owner Mark Lionetta to see if the space is available. Alec offered support in the form of a Google Map guide that marks the businesses that are represented at Kristin's pop-up. Rich is working with Alec to explore grant opportunities (e.g., from Commonwealth Places) to conduct a pop-up market next November or December.

10. Chairperson's Items

As the Planning Board liaison, Rich gave an update from the Planning Board on two applications: 242-244 Adams Place (denied); 1414 Mass Ave (approved with conditions). The board will continue to hear 100 Codman Hill Road application. Also discussed traffic study and commercial dumps which are on the fall town meeting warrant.

Next meeting: October 26 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Alec suggests a limited scope agenda for EDC meetings going forward if possible (limiting the number of items to two or three). If we have a grant application, we will take that up and the business breakfast.

Future Dates: 11/9, 11/30, 12/7

Mark moved to adjourn at 9:52 p.m. Marta seconded. Motion passed 7-0 by roll call vote.