



BOXBOROUGH PLANNING DEPARTMENT
29 Middle Road, Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719
www.boxborough-ma.gov | (978) 264-1723

Attn: Economic Development Committee

September 5, 2023

Subject: Findings and Recommendation – Boxborough Business Improvement Grant Program – Two Friends Chocolates

On August 17, 2023, we received an application for the Boxborough Business Improvements Grant Program, from the applicant business Two Friends Chocolates. As per your NOFA, issued on July 29, 2023, I have reviewed the materials submitted, offering the following summary and draft score.

Summary

The applicant has provided a complete application and demonstrated the necessary match. The proposal entails use of funding to cover inventory, permitting, advertising, and salary costs. As a result of your proposed investment, the applicant proposes the implementation of a new hot chocolate stand, s'mores nook, and expansion of the existing retail operation. This consumer facing service, is described by the applicant as "quaint café ambience," and would provide unique service to the community. A portion of the applicants matching funds will go towards capital improvements to construct the outdoor dining area and establish a café space.

The proposed expansion would offer new services, as described above, and would result in the hiring of a new part time employee, with further inclusion of volunteer opportunities to younger members of the community. Further, through advertising and investment on IT infrastructure, the applicant proposes an expansion to their existing chocolate crafting workshops and community events. The applicant, in conjunction with this application, intends to sign a three-year lease to remain in their existing location, 629 Massachusetts Avenue.

Draft Score

Attached you will find a complete draft score of the application. I offer a draft score of 81 points for the proposed application. The application scored most highly in the Impact to Town Center category, as the business falls within the economic target area and will support neighboring businesses. Further, the business is likely to draw in traffic from outside town boundaries, thus expanding commerce in town.

The proposal falls within the list of priority businesses and provides product direct to consumers. While not a new business, the proposed services will be unique to the community and will result in the hiring of a new employee on site. While additional matching funds are provided, the amount provided was not enough to trigger additional points.

Recommendation

I recommend the board approve the application provided, and authorize the Town Planner to issue an award letter. After consultation with the Building Department and the Nashoba Regional Board of Health, we anticipate no further land use permitting. If approved, I anticipate the applicant could commence work within a month of award letter. Contract documents can be prepared for the meeting immediately after approval.

Sincerely,



Alexander Wade(He/Him)
Director of Land Use and Permitting
Town Planner
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29 Middle Rd
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Boxborough Business Improvement Grants
ATTACHMENT B – DRAFT SCORE Two Friends Chocolates



Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded
Priority Goods, Services, or Cultural Business – Does the grant support a business listed as a priority enterprise? (Attachment C) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-8 points for a business substantially similar to a business listed in Attachment C. • 9-15 points for a business not listed in Attachment C, who provides services or goods direct to consumers. • 16-25 points for a business listed in Attachment C, who provides services or goods direct to consumers. 	25	20
Impact of COVID 19 – Has the COVID 19 pandemic detrimentally impacted the business or their ability to operate? Alternatively, will this business help respond to ongoing or future pandemics? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 points for a business who was minimally impacted by the pandemic or will not help respond to the ongoing pandemic. • 6-10 points for a business who was moderately impacted by the pandemic or may provide minimal community benefit in future pandemics. • 11-15 points for a business who was detrimentally impacted by the pandemic or will provide key services in future pandemics. 	15	11
Impact to Town Center – Does the proposed project add to the character of the proposed Downtown Neighborhood? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-10 points for a business who is located outside of the proposed economic center and does not impact the neighborhood • 11-20 points for a business who is not located in the proposed economic center, but has significant positive impact to the village center. • 21-30 points for a business who is located in the proposed economic center and will drive commerce to the area. 	30	30
New Business Incentive – Is the proposed use of funding meant to support a new business in the Town of Boxborough? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-7 points for a business already in existence, with no discernable difference from an existing business. • 8-15 points for a business that is substantially similar to an existing business, but provides a unique and new good or service • 16-20 points for a business that does not currently exist in Boxborough and substantially contributes to the Town's local economy. 	20	15
Matching Funds – Does the applicant provide adequate or greater match than required? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 points for a business providing the minimum match (50%). • 6-10 points for a business providing greater match, scaled by 1 point per \$10,000. 	10	5
Total	Up to 100	81