**Economic Development Committee**



Butterick Building, 1 Park Street, Room 205

**ZOOM Meeting due to COVID-19**

November 30 2020

Time 8:30 AM

**Minutes**

**Present:** Chairman James Patacchiola, Keith Cordial, Paul Cathcart,

**Absent:**  Maureen Cranson, Michael Pineo

**Non-Members present:**  Fred Aponte (Staff), Domenica Tatasciore (Staff)

**Open Meeting:** Chairman Patacchiola opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

**Approval of Past Minutes:** James Patacchiola made the motion to accept the minutes of the October 26, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Keith Cordial. The motion was unanimously accepted.

**Town Planner Update: Planning Board Meeting Presentation**

Domenica Tatasciore remarked that the December 7th town meeting has been canceled due to the pandemic.

Ms. Tatasciore is working with Paul Lyons and the MassDOT new “Winter “Shared and Streets Spaces” grant extension in order to make the temporary changes that have been made permanent, such as the Library and Main Street changes “We’re looking for new money. A fresh grant related to the money for town centers program.”

**1835 Building Project**

Fred Aponte reported that the carpet work at the 1835 Building is done. The cost was $11,280.00, all taken from the Economic Development budget. The balance in the EDC budget is $15,791.67

**Promoting Sterling to Business Development**

Chairman Patacchiola cautioned that “Promoting Sterling to Business Development” plans are dependent on the town meeting. He added that, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, such meetings have been delayed.

Paul Cathcart suggested the concept of a fund raiser for businesses to provide money towards the town which would also furnish an opportunity to “schmooze” with business owners, keeping them apprised of what’s going on in town, including town issues that their funding would help alleviate. Mr. Cathcart commented that this would not be replacing the town forums that Lex Thomas has been working on.

Chairman Patacchiola asked if non-town members could be involved. This would be a question for Town Council.

**Town Center Revitalization**

Paul Cathcart has been in talks with an Executive Vice President at Verizon informing them of the issues we have had getting the work done and reiterating to them about the $123,000.00 that the town has made available for the project. Following this, Mr. Cathcart had a ZOOM meeting with a higher level Verizon person than the one he had first encountered (this person also attended the ZOOM meeting). Mr. Cathcart has been working with Sean Hamilton who is knowledgeable and knows Verizon very well.

**Business Recognition and Awards Program**

Keith Cordial and Paul Cathcart both agreed to work separately from the Meetinghouse News people who have a similar initiative. Mr. Cordial has generated a list of businesses in town and has narrowed his list down to the following companies: LKQ, Alta Aviation, Davis Farmland, Flanagan Insurance, Don-Jo Manufacturing, HydroiTech, and Meadowbrook.

Plaques are popular – companies like to show them off.

Suggestion: various awards for various efforts, such as landscaping and building improvements. Domenica Tatasciore suggested that there should be a whole nomination and awards process. She suggested that Mr. Cordial should Google to see what other town’s have done. Mr. Cathcart said this project is a work-in-progress, We should start with what’s been done spot-lighting 3 or 4 companies in town who have done well. Ms. Tatasciore agreed that the program should start small and build on it. Chairman Patacchiola also agreed and stressed that publicity is important. The winners should get a plaque, a letter and publicity. He suggested that Mr. Cordial work with Lex Thomas on the publicity aspect.

**Town Beach Drainage Updat**e

Paul Cathcart reiterated that Maureen Cranson had said that the money has been earmarked for this project. Mr. Cathcart added that the work still has not been done. He said that, even with the Covid-19 pandemic, the work could still be done. Fred Aponte will follow up.

**Announcements**

Keith Cordial mentioned that he had seen a “Welcome Home to a Soldier at Christmas” event. He thought it sounded like a good idea.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Nuisance Properties**

Paul Cathcart made several comments regarding the issue of Sarah Culgin having the responsibility but little authority when faced with getting erring residents to comply with the town’s ordinances against nuisance properties. He stressed that the town should “take the high road” first, then add more “muscle” to communication efforts, start with a few problems, the rest may follow. Chairman Patacchiola said he will add to next meeting’s agenda the concept of showing support for Ms. Culgin’s efforts. Fred Aponte stated that mention of the issue is set for the next town meeting.

Domenica Tatasciore stated that what is needed is an accompanying Nuisance Property By-law. Fred Aponte volunteered to work on a by-law with Ms. Culgin between now and the next town meeting which is some months away. Paul Cathcart volunteered to investigate what other towns are doing.

**Town Beach Drainage Updat**e

Paul Cathcart suggested that once the town beach drainage project is done, a plan should be put in place of what the beach should look like. Domenica Tatasciore recommended that they speak with Matt Marro of the Conservation Committee and Dick Maki to understand their views. The new Town Administrator should be included in the talks, although she is so new she should be given a few weeks to get acclimated to the job. In the meantime Mr. Cathcart and Fred Aponte with talk.

**The Sterling Inn**

Tori Luksha, who gave the EDC a presentation for potential future plans for The Sterling Inn, has been having trouble getting into the building. Fred Aponte mentioned that the town’s efforts to go through the courts, added to the delays with Covid-19, have slowed down the process. Judy Reynolds is the realtor, but has given no response. Paul Cathcart will call Ms. Reynolds again notifying her that someone is interested in the property.

**Adjournment of Meeting**

Chairman Patacchiola made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Keith Cordial seconded. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a. m.

The next EDC meeting date is December 28, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. A topic for discussion will be the Awards Program’s criteria. Sean Hamilton is expected to have an update regarding the Verizon project. Agenda item to show support for Sarah Culgin regarding nuisance properties.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara O’Connor, Recorder