

Economic Development Committee

June 27, 2022

Butterick Building, 1 Park Street, Room 205

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Chair James Patacchiola

Present: James Patacchiola, Richard Maki, Paul Cathcart and Rosanne Mapp,

Also Present: William Caldwell, Town Administrator

Past Meeting Minutes: Minutes of the May 23, 2022 meeting were approved.

Expense Reimbursement Forms were distributed. The Town has tax exempt status. Liz Clemence has information on this as well as a list of Town approved vendors who may be used. Receipts must be attached to the completed form, and mileage can be included on the form.

Town Planner. The Town Planner search is ongoing.

Town Center Renovation. Dick Maki would like to look at the Community Preservation Act (CPA). This is the legislation that provides funding to communities for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. He also suggested looking at Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for improvements of building facades. Town Administrator Bill Caldwell will present information, including pros and cons, on these programs at next month's meeting.

There was discussion of the need to have a plan with timelines for the town center renovation. Rosanne Mapp suggested bringing other invested individuals to Committee meetings to help move things forward. Ryan Mouradian (DPW) and Darren Borge (SMLD) will attend the July meeting.

MRPC Permitting Guide is nearing completion.

Parking Behind the 1835 Town Hall. The small brick building behind the 1835 Town Hall apparently has no real historical significance, but the records stored there need to be taken care of. Removal of the building will provide additional parking, including good handicap parking. Parking behind the Butterick building is underutilized, perhaps because the "municipal parking" sign leads people to think that it's only for town business. A parking sign with the international (and familiar) parking symbol might help direct people to this parking space.

Commercial and Industrial properties. The Sholan building on Main Street and the Meola building and property are still available. There was a discussion about downtowns making a comeback (malls are closing, big box stores can be frustrating to shop in) and the need to meet with Sterling's shop and building owners re: town revitalization

Mass DOT Rt-12. Paul Cathcart has asked the DOT for their maintenance schedule for the median. So far, one cutting has been completed; we are due 3 more.

Intersection of Rts. 140 & 62. DPW is in command of this ongoing process

Town Beach Renovation. A decision will soon be made on bids from 3 different landscape engineers. We also have estimates from a mason, electrician and carpenter for the ADA work on the bathrooms. This work will be covered by the grant we received courtesy of our state reps and senators. An ADA flexible mat has been ordered which will allow safe access to the beach from Hall Ave. DPW has bought equipment to screen the beach sand in order to produce a finer grade of sand which will be much easier on people's feet. Dick Maki is meeting with the Conservation Agent about the work that's being planned. Next up: select a landscape engineer within the next 4-6 weeks. They will do a draft of their proposal. A contract will hopefully be out by the end of this year or early spring, 2023.

Buy Local. Rosanne Mapp suggested that EDC sponsor a Buy Local program 3 times a year (spring, summer, late fall) to encourage local people to support local shops. This will require a full-blown advertising campaign. It will become a community event that celebrates Sterling and helps encourage new businesses to come to town. The budget and other details of the program will be discussed further at the next meeting.

EDC Budget for 2023. EDC will have \$16,000 as of July 1, 2022. This can cover engineering studies, the Buy Local and Awards programs. There was discussion around getting a "tourist-type" map made that could help tourists, potential businesses and residents alike. Budget allocations will be discussed at the July meeting.

Dick Maki moved to approve \$250 for a new parking sign with the international symbol to replace the old sign; Rosanne Mapp seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Next meeting will be July 25th. Motion to adjourn made by Rosanne Mapp and seconded by Paul Cathcart; motion was approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:40.

Submitted by Melissa Chalmers, recorder