

Economic Development Committee

July 25, 2022

Butterick Building, 1 Park Street, Room 205

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair James Patacchiola

Present: James Patacchiola, Richard Maki, Paul Cathcart, Maureen Cranson, Keith Cordial and Rosanne Mapp (via ZOM)

Also Present: William Caldwell (Town Administrator) and Ryan Mouradian (DPW)

This was Keith Cordial's last meeting with the Committee. He will share his contacts and information on business development and recognition/awards with whomever picks up his Committee responsibilities. All members extend sincerest thanks for all the work he has done on the Committee's behalf. Dick Maki said that there are now 3 vacancies on the Committee.

Town Center Renovation. According to Ryan Mouradian, drainage on Main Street is a "disaster." Everyone agreed that the drainage needs updating before the sidewalk project can begin. While there is no timeline yet, the project should be able to start next year, depending on when grant money comes through. MassWorks is a source of grant money that could be looked into. Members also discussed parking around the common, which often leaves insufficient room for driving, and the green-painted section of road in front of the library, which many residents object to.

Trash cans will be available for residents during the second week of September. Each home will get one covered trash can and one recycle bin. Trash will continue to be collected weekly; recycling will be collected every other week. All recycling can be co-mingled in the single bin. A web site will be available to help people with their recycling questions.

Town Planner. There have been no applicants to date, and the search continues.

MRPC Permitting Guide. Patty Page sent copies of the Guide to Committee members for review and comment. The Guide will be produced by the Building Department.

Sterling Business Development. Members agreed that it is important to have some physical evidence of renovation – something that people can see – to encourage people to get behind the project. Paul Cathcart pointed out that an architect's rendering of the proposed storefront renovation will be helpful.

Routes 140 and 62. DPW is now in charge of this project.

Town Beach. The Conservation Commission is expected to approved the proposed work at the Town Beach at their August meeting. Dick Maki has a meeting scheduled with the landscape engineer; he will develop a plan by September. Then a contractor can be hired. Hopefully, work can begin before the end of the year. Drainage at the Beach and pollution from Swett Hill Road continue to be problematic. There is also a problem with vandalism. Lights/cameras will help deter the vandalism, and police involvement is needed to let people know that anyone damaging property will be prosecuted. Perhaps a notice to this effect could be placed in the Meetinghouse News.

Buy Local. The Buy Local events should be held at least a couple of times a year and can coordinate with other Town events (e.g., Art in the Park, the library craft show, the senior center craft and cookie sale) and holidays. Rosanne Mapp is contacting local eateries to participate in the October Art in the Park event. We should also seek opinions from local retailers about how they would like to participate in the Buy Local program.

EDC Goals and Budget. Money is needed for Buy Local, Art in the Park, and other events, to cover advertising and incidentals. Dick Maki made a motion to allot \$500 each for Buy Local, Town Clean-up, and Art in the Park. Maureen Cranson seconded. After discussion, Dick moved to allot a separate \$1,000 for advertising for all 3 projects. Maureen Cranson seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Community Project Funding. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds projects in 4 areas: open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. Sterling may not have need in these areas. However, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) could provide money for improving facades of downtown buildings. Bill Caldwell will look into this for the next meeting.

Bill Caldwell got the new parking sign that was discussed at the last meeting. Thanks! It is hoped that this will help people find the parking behind the Butterick building and alleviate some of the parking issues in town.

Next meeting will be August 22nd. Motion to adjourn made by James Patacchiola and seconded by Paul Cathcart; motion was approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:28.

Submitted by Melissa Chalmers, recorder