

Economic Development Committee

May 22, 2023

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, Paul Cathcart, Richard Maki, Rosanne Mapp

Also Present: Stephen Wallace (Town Planner), Kevin Kuros (Mass. Office of Business Development), Scott Aponte and Yoanna Osborne (Brothers Remodeling)

Minutes of the April meeting were approved.

Kevin Kuros gave a presentation on the Economic Development Incentive Program (EIP) the State's program for new and expanding businesses to seek tax incentives in exchange for capital improvements and job creation. He discussed:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which allows municipalities to offer commercial businesses relief from property taxes in exchange for: 1) improving/increasing the value of their business parcel and; 2) creating jobs. This benefit is negotiated between the Town and the Business. Stephen Wallace distributed copies of Sterling Select Board's draft TIF policy. Not sure if it's been adopted yet.
- The Mass. Vacant Storefront Program is a matching tax incentive program for small businesses moving into empty buildings/spaces.
- Mass. Development Programs, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), offers a way for businesses to finance clean energy improvements. Mass Development is the State's finance authority while Mass. Office of Business Development handles the incentive side of things.

There is also money available for facade improvements from the Healy administration's Downtown Initiative. Stephen Wallace will look into this for more detail.

Scott Aponte said that he is going for a construction grant from Mass Development to develop retail and residential space at the Sterling Inn.

EDC Website. Rosanne Mapp thanked Stephen Wallace for all the work he's done on business development for Sterling, and made a motion that Stephen Wallace get the EDC website up and running and continue to maintain it. Dick Maki seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Town Planner Update: Brochure. Edits will be made this week (May 22-25) by Monty Tech.

There was discussion around developing a second, more “touristy” map in addition to the more detailed business map that Monty Tech is producing.

The topic of wayfinding and signage was raised and it was agreed that there would be discussion of signage at the next meeting.

There was discussion of available commercial/business properties and the importance of putting this information on the website and on a potential facebook page. There was also a discussion of communication with and between other committees as well as with Town residents.

Town Center Store Front Renovation. The Committee plans to meet with property owners about renovating their storefronts once we have drawings and other information for them, e.g., available loans, grants, etc.

Town Beach Renovation. ADA-compliant bathroom renovations are in progress, some are completed. A stonemason has been contacted. Flooring options are being considered. Tree work is being planned. 7 or 8 pedestal barbecues need to be replaced. Rosanne Mapp thanked Dick Maki for his work on beach renovation and Town Clean-up over the years. Paul Cathcart and Jim Patacchiola agreed.

There was a discussion of special permits, handicapped access, and fundraising/donations from local businesses for Town projects.

Jim Patacchiola moved to **adjourn the meeting at 11:03**. Paul Cathcart seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 26th, 9 am.

Submitted by Melissa Chalmers, recorder