

Economic Development Committee

July 24, 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, Richard Maki, Mark Stoeve, Maureen Cranson, Brian Kindorf.

Also Present: Stephen Wallace (Town Planner), William Caldwell (Town Administrator)

Minutes of the June meeting were approved.

EDC's **budget for FY'24** is \$16,000.

Discussion of a **Facebook** page will be taken up at the next meeting. It was noted that most towns don't have their own Facebook pages. All the Committee's information is already posted on the website, and Facebook would probably generate lots of gratuitous complaints, as is often the case.

Town Planner update. Stephen Wallace suggested that the Committee may need a money warrant article (for the next Town Meeting) in order to pay for the completion and installation of our wayfinding signs. In January, members should choose the signs they want (we need 3-4 entrance signs) and prepare the money warrant.

Regarding building facade improvement programs: Sterling isn't eligible for CDBG funds, which many other towns have used for their Downtown building facades. Neither can we use taxpayer funds to benefit private businesses such as the downtown buildings. However, Mass Development suggests crowd funding. The State will match up to \$20,000 of funds raised by local businesses. Stephen will look into a Mass Growth Capital Corporation Biz-M-Power Grant to see if that might be a possible source of funds.

Members discussed meeting with landlords about improvements to their buildings. We will need a cost estimate, and it was suggested that we check with other communities to see how they made their pitch to the landlords. Hopefully, by Spring we will have general cost estimates and architectural renderings to take to the landlords.

Town Administrator update. Renovations are on schedule.

Town Beach Update. The ADA work has been completed. Security cameras are working. We are waiting for the Rec. Dept's season to end before continuing with tree removal and landscaping. Everything is on time. \$170K - \$200K is estimated for the rest of the work.

Next meeting will be held on August 28th.

Jim Patacchiola moved to adjourn the meeting, Dick Sheppard seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:18.

Submitted by Melissa Chalmers, recorder