

Economic Development Committee --
Meeting Minutes
Monday, 23 April 2018 Meeting
9:02 am

Attendees:	Chair, Jim Patacchiola	Vice Chair, Mike Pineo
	Richard Maki	Secretary, Rosanne Mapp
	TA, Ross Perry	Paul Cathcart
	Treasurer, Brian Kindorf	BOS, Maureen Cranson

Guest: Lex Thomas

Non-attendees:

Call to Order: 9:00 am

Minutes of 26 March 2018 meeting. Approved as written:

1st: M. Pineo 2nd: M. Cranson All in favor

Lex Thomas Update:

Report to the Economic Development Committee, April 23, 2018

1. Introduction

Since embarking upon this project in February 2018, several initiatives are already underway, and more are in the planning process. This report enumerates initiatives underway and planned, recommends strategies to promote upcoming events, and identifies obstacles that may impact implementation of the “Sterling Choice” communications plan.

EDC members agreed that their top marketing/communications priorities are:

- an effective online presence, including website, social media, and video/visual presence
 - a comprehensive information kit
 - a “speaker’s bureau” of town officials equipped and prepared to address business organizations, businesses seeking premises, chambers of commerce, government officials, and media to promote Sterling as a desirable location.

2. Accomplished

- Press release issued on February 1, 2018, announcing the “Sterling Choice” initiative resulted in a feature story in The Landmark, published on February 21.
- <http://www.thelandmark.com/articles/sterling-to-develop-marketing-strategy-to-bring-businesses-to-town/>
- Sterling Meetinghouse News (under new ownership effective March 2018) will publish a story about the initiative in the May 9 issue by reporter Danielle Ray.
- Lex Thomas has set up online alerts for news pertaining to Sterling, Massachusetts; and Town of Sterling, Massachusetts; in order to most effectively track and distribute stories pertaining to the town.
- Press release issued on February 6, 2018, re: Senator Dean Tran’s meeting with Town of Sterling officials.
- Town of Sterling Facebook page established. [facebook.com/sterlingmass/](https://www.facebook.com/sterlingmass/). My goal is to post items daily.

3. Work in progress

Communications is a very fluid and organic process, i.e., things change! So, something listed as an accomplishment is always undergoing refinements and precision. Likewise, items on-going may already be yielding results.

- Refining Facebook feed to maximize exposure. This is a study unto itself.

- Twitter. Will be set up in the next few days, once Facebook feed is working optimally.
- LinkedIn. Will be set up in the next few days, once Facebook feed is working optimally.
- Lex Thomas will meet with new Town Clerk, Barbara Bartlett, to coordinate flow of news and events for posting to Facebook and Twitter.
- The Annual Town Meeting results on the marijuana issue will be extremely important to this town, whichever way it goes. If there's a prohibition voted, it will simply mean that people will go elsewhere. But if some form of approval is voted in, we need to jump on a campaign that will explain the bylaw and its implications, making it palatable to residents and welcoming to businesses. I need your approval to work on this .
- Town Clean-Up Day on May 19 offers a tremendous opportunity to promote Sterling as a caring, aware, and future-oriented community friendly toward both businesses and residents. As the annual greens sale and YAHOO season opening are also scheduled for that date, and as a number of local organizations are involved in the event, I recommend a full-scale promotion beginning during the final week of April and lasting until May 19. I need your approval to work on this .
- Town Officials profiles for website. Nowadays, so much business is conducted without any physical contact between parties. But we all still crave a human connection. The town website will be greatly enhanced by thumbnail profiles of town employees and key board members, and brief bios. I am working on a questionnaire to be distributed to town employees in order to put these together.
- I have discussed the idea of a promotional video with SLCT. They are willing to work with us on this, but have requested a script from me. I am working on this, and will present it to Ross Perry when I have it ready.
- Logo: While town logo change would entail legal process as well as town approval, a "Sterling Choice" logo that would appear alongside the town logo and be part of the communications would be an effective way of bridging generations and bring together lifelong and new residents and businesses. I would like to launch a logo design contest on May 19 for local residents and students. I need your approval to work on this. This is also an important part of the branding that we need.
- I have spoken to the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce. While they don't have speakers from towns at their events (which is a whole other area of concern), they recommend that town officials attend Chamber events to have access to businesses looking for locations.
- Ross Perry and I attended the Annual Tourism Update Breakfast on March 23. There were opportunities that we both recognized that could be significant for Sterling.

4. Challenges

- At this time, the foremost challenge I'm facing in terms of communications and promotion is the readiness of the town, i.e., bylaws, processes, etc., to move forward. To reiterate my dinner party analogy, we don't want to invite guests, then open the door wearing housecoats.
- Example: we have the sewer study going on. Let's think ahead to 2019 or 2020 when this will be available and start courting businesses now.

Lex stated that the Town website is more user-friendly now. Pertinent information is now on the front page. One thing is missing... the faces of the people in the Town Offices (a who's who page).

There will be a live-broadcast on Wednesday the 24th of April, 9-9:45 am to discuss the Warrant.

Sterling Pride

- Request that L. Thomas contact The Meetinghouse News to query the price of a full page ad (somewhere in the middle) or a banner on the front page. L. Thomas stated that there was 1/4 page available on the back page. She will check pricing ---not to exceed \$675.00.
- Motion to proceed R. Mapp 2nd M. Pineo All in favor
- Lex will inform Rosanne and together they will make the decision on the design and placement.
- EDC should be mentioned somewhere in the ad.
- L. Thomas will post Sterling Pride Clean Up day on Facebook, etc.

- R. Maki and M. Cranson to contact Hendrickson's for signs to be created for this event. Not to exceed \$400.00 .Motion to proceed: M. Pineo 2nd D. Maki All in favor
- Dick has contacted Maki with regard to gloves, bags for Clean Up day. Dick has received a discount from Maki's for gloves (originally 99 cents) for 30 cents each pair. Trash Bags 250 + will be needed Motion for D. Maki to procure the gloves and bags from Maki's--not to exceed \$200. Motion: M. Cranson 2nd M. Pineo All in favor
- The DPW agreed to pick up the bags on 21 May 2018. They have requested the bags be placed at the corner of each intersection as opposed to multiple bags dotted along the roadside.

Abandoned/Nuisance Property. R. Perry

- Letter being written by Building Dept for the family on Route 62 regarding red couch.
- R. Mapp will look into the Rubbish By law for roadside trash.
- 3 Princeton Road: property has been purchased. Clean-up will be done. Expected they will demolish present building.

Budget update. B. Kindorf, Treasurer

- B. Kindorf met with Fincom on increased budget for FY2019 of \$26K...approved
- No change. \$13,500.00 remains.
- No expenses last month.

Town Activity: M. Pineo

- Sterling is almost built-out for Residential Real Estate.
- SEM has been sold. It will remain as a Medical Division. They expect to add 50-60 people by 3Q2019.
- Sterling Gym will be adding 1600 sq ft to their existing building for a Ninja studio. They have been working with the Planning Board.

Parking Update.

- R Maki stated they need to know the # spaces to give reassurance. Conversation about contacting WPI to inquire if they had an Intern Program for students to work in the community.

Action: R. Maki

- Sidewalk plan 2-3 years out Sewer plan 5-10 years out.
- B. Kindorf would like to revisit this information in the next meeting.

BOS Report/Update: M. Cranson

- Community First Solar program
- J. Bennett, new town clerk, works with OSIC, and has help develop Groton Master Plan. She will be a vital resource.
- Town is going to review the license to "use Town Property" in the hopes of reclaiming the property and setting new goals and agreements. Guidelines for Food Trucks....
- Town Warrant is done and can be picked up at the Town Clerk's Office.
- Warrant issues discussed. Fincom is in favor.
 - Marijuana topic discussed. Certain members of the Committee are in favor of a total moratorium on this Warrant item. There are 3 Warrant items; 1) Total Prohibition, 2)Zoning of facilities, 3) adding a 3 percent tax.

Sewer Study:

- Discussions on the Study. Didn't address certain Town issues. i.e., Route 12 N.
- What would be the payback for the investment for the few people who would benefit and what would their contribution to it be.

- M. Pineo informed the committee about the business properties Downtown that have new septic systems.
- Will it limit future growth in Sterling.
- M. Pineo stated that water is our immediate issue.

New Business

- P. Cathcart, R. Maki and M. Pineo have agreed to create an EDC sub-committee to work in parallel with the EDC to garnish various information.
- Bio Ready Community/Worcester Business Journal. R. Maki suggests that this publication would be of great value for the EDC and the Town of Sterling. There is a great deal happening in this field and Sterling should be kept informed. Committee asked D. Maki if he would bring in his copy for the Committee to review. Yearly subscription is \$55.00.
- R. Mapp requests that "Old Business" items be placed on the Agenda in order to close out items.

Old Business

Pending Action Items:

- All Boards Meeting. Will there be a follow up.
Richard Maki would like a meeting with other boards to discuss items that the EDC is working on to determine who should pursue joint issues.
- R. Maki stated that people are interested in Senior Housing in Sterling/not low-income.
- M. Cranson stated that she has spoken to 2 developers recently. She will ask them if they are interested.
- P. Cathcart suggested putting signs up with "Littering" fines.
- R. Perry will look into delinquent properties. What can be done.
- R. Perry will continue to pursue with the Building Department. Where do we go from here?
- Worcester St. Garage--a potential buyer. ? if there is some way to give owner incentive to reduce the cost. The price is too high.

Next MEETING:

☐☐ **Monday, 21 MAY 2018, 9:00 am. BOS Mtg. Room**

Adjourn 11:00 am Motion J. Patacchiola 2nd. M. Pineo All in favor.

