

Sterling Economic Development Committee

Butterick Municipal Building – Room 205

February 25, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman James Patacchiola, Paul Cathcart, Keith Cordial, Maureen Cranson, Richard Maki and Michael Pineo. **Absent:** Roseanne Mapp. **Also attending:** Ross Perry and Domenica Tatasciori.

Opened meeting: Chairman Patacchiola opened the meeting at 9:03 am.

Approve Minutes: Approved minutes of January 24, 2019 following motion by Pineo and second by Cathcart. Vote: 6 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 Abstentions.

1. **Lex Thomas Up Date** postponed until next month.

2. **Town Planner Report:** Domenica Tatasciori discussed town zoning and distributed copies of two documents describing conditions for Special Permits in Sterling and a useful checklist used by a commercial business to quantify comparative relocation potential in Massachusetts communities. She addressed the need to rezone the westerly side of route 12 opposite from Clinton Savings Bank to the E.F. Perkins quarry as “Town Center” rather than the current classification as “Residential”. A discussion occurred and members reviewed the potential properties included in the proposed classification revision. Pineo suggested that the proposed revision originate with the Board of Selectmen and the Committee voted (6 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 Abs.) to ask the BOS to request that the Planning Board support the rezoning of that section of route 12. The “Town Center” classification is sufficiently broad to allow for future operations of the former Sterling Inn.

3. **Town Center Revitalization:** Maki described the work of a subcommittee comprised of Sean Hamilton, Bill Tuttle and himself to address increased downtown parking, sidewalk improvements, and burial of power, telephone and cable lines in downtown Sterling. The subcommittee will report to the main committee next week to further refine the plans. One issue Hamilton reported was difficulty in getting a cost estimate from Verizon for their portion of the proposed work. Options are being explored. The major benefits to the Town would be an improvement in the available parking, visual enhancement of the Town Center, increased handicap accessibility and a higher level of security for all utility services.

4. **EDC Budget:** A budget request for \$26,000 has been submitted to the FinCom that mirrors the current budget level. Defense of the request will occur this Saturday (3-2-2019) at 11:10 am. Mr. Patacchiola is securing an accounting of current expenditures prior to the next meeting.

5.Master Plan: 32 citizens participated in the most recent Master Plan community meeting during which participants shared strengths and weaknesses in eight of the nine MP study categories. A public Open House to solicit community engagement in the MP process will be held on April 4, 2019 at the Sterling Senior Center. A formal MP committee will be initiated by the BOS following the community meeting. Of interest to the EDC was maintenance of an adequate water supply for future economic development.

6.Sterling Clean Up: “Sterling Clean Up Day” will be on the morning of April 27, 2019. Civic groups including the Scouts, Yahoo, downtown businesses, local churches, and others will be contacted.

Cranson and Cordial volunteered to contact some groups. Maps, gloves, trash bags are already available for the event.

7.Abandoned/Nuisance Properties: No discussion/action.

8.Town Beach Improvements: The citizens group meets immediately following the EDC meeting.

EDC members discussed the needs of the beach area including serious storm water drainage issues impacting the beach and steps to generally improve the appearance of the buildings. Maki will speak with DPW head Bill Tuttle to request that the deteriorated concrete barriers at the end of Hall Avenue be removed and replaced with appropriate materials due to safety concerns. Discussion occurred regarding the need to paint existing buildings, source of funding and under whose responsibility it should fall. The beach group will discuss this issue today. Members wondered if the DPW or the Recreation Committee had specific budget lines for materials and maintenance services for the town beach.

9.Town Activity: Pineo spoke about funds derived from current and future forest management work and application to better development and community usage of the forested area behind Butterick Building. Support and engagement of the Conservation Commission is expected as the forestry project advance. The upcoming budget is a focus of the BOS according to Cranson and she reported on the emergent Sterling business Association meeting attended mainly by realtors and downtown business owners as being a good start with continued encouragement by the EDC as they develop into their own independent entity.

Adjournment: Following a motion by Maki and second by Pineo, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Richard H. Maki
Temporary EDC Clerk