

Economic Development Committee

Butterick Building – Room 205

June 24, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Opened: Chairman J. Patacchiola opened the meeting at 8:01 AM.

Present: Paul Cathcart, Keith Cordial, Maureen Cranson, Richard Maki, James Patacchiola, Ross Perry, Domenica Tatasciore. Guest: Rudd Mason

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Cranson and seconded by Cathcart.

Route 12 Roundabout: Mr. Cathcart invited Mr. Mason to speak about the type and maintenance of plants leading to and from the roundabout system on route 12. He identified issues with successful vegetative plantings including full sun, road salt and lack of moisture that inhibit or negatively affect planting in open/highway locations. He suggested wildflower and meadow grasses that might offer some color and definition to the perimeters and center islands. Other options were discussed including more mulch for spacing, day lilies, black eyed susan's, and hostas. Ultimately, he recommended asking the Commonwealth to replant using meadow grasses and to mow twice per growing season. Mr. Mason agreed to research a possible solution used in a rotary in Belmont and report back to the Committee.

Lex Thomas Communications Summary: Ms. Thomas circulated printed materials regarding the Celebrate Sterling, Sterling Business Association and new business/property awareness. The EDC expressed their appreciation for the successful Celebrate Sterling event and invoices would total approximately \$1,700. She suggested future event improvements including seating near food vendors, more trash receptacles, picking an earlier event date, and faster funding turnaround be considered for next year.

Lex spoke about future goals and cited the recent growth of businesses in Worcester as an indicator that Sterling needs to better market what the town has to offer. She wants to repeat the small business forum in late October, to be hosted by the EDC, SBA and the farming community. A major communications outreach was discussed as she identified the negative trend in area print newspapers now under one ownership that are promoting significant scale down of reporters and community news. Another idea she would like to support is a "First Night" in Sterling on December 31st. Thomas also wants to increase use of Instagram in order to reach a younger generation contrasted with Facebook that reaches an older audience.

Regarding the SBA, Lex wants to provide contacts to new businesses like restaurants and other businesses, as a needed service. Future funding would support an additional 5-6 additional

monthly hours; a topic that will be addressed by the EDC in July. She also recommended that the EDC have a booth at the Sterling Fair where Sterling-related clothing and decorative items could be promoted.

Town Planner: Domenica reported that the Attorney General's office has approved the zoning changes along a portion of route 12 that was OK'd by the Annual Town Meeting. She asked for ideas and assistance in finding a suitable location for a proposed micro-brewery and tasting room that was seeking to locate in Sterling. A number of sites were discussed along with constraints imposed by usage requirements expressed in the Town protective bylaws. A copy of the Master Plan summary report prepared by the MP consultant was distributed. The planner expressed the need to include the town Building Commissioner in future zoning-related issues because she is often the first point of contact by developers and can assist the EDC and other boards in addressing badly needed zoning usage tables. Usage categories that were identified in past years reflecting community concerns no longer serve the best interests of modern economic development interests in Town.

Town Center Status: Mr. Perry reported that the selectmen had signed an agreement with W & S to produce an updated revitalization plan for the town center. The project includes the initial work of burying utilities and paving a small section of sidewalk reaching from SMLD property to the area of the former Santandar bank.

FY 2020 EDC Goals: Chairman Patacchiola suggested future work on:

- Analysis of zoning use tables
- Promoting start-up business development
- Developing permitting flowcharts to guide incoming developers and businesses
- Improvement of regional waste disposal operations
- Ways to improve communications with the DPW board and Recreation Committee.

Other Business: The EDC voted unanimously to place Keith Cordial on the Master Plan Committee to represent the economic interests of the community in development of a future Master Plan. The Committee also commended Building Commissioner Sarah Culgin in her ongoing efforts to address abandon and nuisance properties.

Mr. Cathcart reported that significant positive changes have occurred at the Town Beach this spring including the painting of several buildings, installation of a new roof, as well as DPW work to grade the beach and removal of hazardous pylons. Removal of other concrete barriers near the beach entry needs further action according to Cathcart.

Adjournment: The Committee adjourned at 10:23 AM following a successful motion by Mr. Cathcart, seconded by Mr. Maki.

Submitted by Richard H. Maki
Acting EDC Clerk