

Economic Development Committee
February 28, 2022

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, Maureen Cranson, Rosanne Mapp, Richard Maki, Keith Cordial, Paul Cathcart

Other Attendees: Patty Page (Building Dept., Planning Board), State Senators John Cronin and Anne Gobi, Representatives Kim Ferguson and Meghan Kilcoyne, Elizabeth Kazinskas (District Director, Kimberly Ferguson's Office) and Joshua Duhamel (Legislative Aide)

Past Meeting Minutes: Minutes of the January 24, 2022 meeting were approved

EDC Projects Special Presentation to Senators Cronin and Gobi, and Representatives Kilcoyne and Ferguson

After a brief introduction by Chair James Patacchiola, **Maureen Cranson gave a short presentation on Sterling's Town Center Revitalization.** She discussed grant money the Town has received to re-do the sidewalks and our collaboration with SMLD, the Library, DPW and others to make Sterling more welcoming and attractive to businesses. She noted that money is the big drawback. Senator Gobi suggested that Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant money might be available. Rep. Kilcoyne asked for a Master Plan or List so that our representatives can know what we need and who to contact when money comes available.

Paul Cathart talked about Phase One of the Revitalization Program and getting Verizon on board to take down the telephone poles and bury the wires underground. This phase will also include new lamp posts that better match the 18th century character of the town. Phase 1 will begin in April. Once we can show tangible results, people will start getting more invested in the project. Phases 2 and 3 will address the retail section of town and will include the sidewalks

Rosanne Mapp discussed Sterling Clean Up Day 2022 which will be held on April 16 and involve many volunteers from the Town coming out to clean up the roadsides. This has been a very successful program since it was first started by Dick Maki 3 years ago.

Dick Maki presented information on the Sterling Town Beach Restoration Project, noting that there are 3 main areas of concern: ADA compliance issues, erosion, and functioning and general appearance. We have been awarded \$100,000 which will go into small improvements such as hay bales to help with some of the storm water problems. But the bulk of the money will go into turning the beach into a better site. He suggested replacing some of the poor quality sand with better quality beach sand that

kids can play in. We will need much more money to deal with all the storm water concerns, parking lot improvements, the town ramp, and bathroom and other ADA compliance issues.

Maureen Cranson said that EDC had been notified that we were in line for 1 million dollars of bond money. Kim Ferguson and Meghan Kilcoyne said that they will keep pushing for bond money, but Sen. John Cronin said that small town projects are not being funded by bond money right now and that we should look to other sources. Our delegation will also sit down with our new Town Administrator once that person has been hired.

Senator Gobi suggested we also work with the Boating Access Board (on the Town Ramp) and the Architectural Access Board on ADA issues.

There was also discussion of constraints relative to the prevailing wage issue.

Keith Cordial gave a short presentation on our Business Awards Program for both new and existing businesses. Representative Kilcoyne said that she would be interested in attending such award ceremonies.

Paul Cathcart discussed Vandalism Prevention, specifically at the 190 overpass bridges. Apparently it costs \$14,000 to repaint the bridges to cover up graffiti. So SMLD came up with a 2-part surveillance system including cameras and motion detector lights to illuminate the area when someone approaches. This system has been working very well at preventing new graffiti.

Finally, **Rosanne Mapp discussed efforts at communicating** the Committee's programs/accomplishments through her postings on Facebook and monthly articles in the Meetinghouse News.

There was a closing discussion on the issues around maintenance/mowing of the rotaries and medians. The Town would just like to keep the ground cover at ground level.

Members and guests both indicated that this had been a helpful meeting. After the delegation left, the EDC got back to regular Committee business.

MRPC Permitting Guide. Patty Page spoke with Meagan Donoghue at MRPC who says that a draft Guide should be ready by our next meeting.

Budget FY'23. EDC will make a budget request for \$16,000 to cover such items as the Town Wide Clean-up Day, publications, the Permitting Guide, advertising, plaques and certificates for the Business Awards Program, and special projects.

Town Administrator Position Update. Interviews will start during the first week of March. There are 4 candidates, all fairly local. Hopefully we will have a name by the Committee's next meeting.

Intersection of Rt 140 and Rt 62. This intersection has the most accidents in town. Sterling doesn't qualify for a traffic light because the traffic flow is under the required minimum for a light. A small rotary is recommended. The Town will have to pay for design work for the project so it will involve a town meeting vote. Source of funding for the project itself is currently undetermined

Sterling Business Development. The Apontes are still waiting for the reports re: mold, asbestos at the Sterling Inn. Rosanne Mapp would like to include information on progress at the Inn for her monthly newspaper articles.

The supply of Town brochures has gotten low. The brochure needs editing and re-printing.

Business Recognition and Awards Program. The next awards will be given out in April. The new business award will go to Emma's Cafe and there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony which Meghan Kilcoyne has expressed interest in attending. Rosanne Mapp made a motion to approve about \$20 to purchase ceremonial ribbon cutting scissors from Amazon; Ms. Cranson seconded. All six members present voted "Aye." Ms. Mapp will purchase the scissors. In addition to the ribbon cutting, a plaque will be awarded to an existing business to recognize them for their work on behalf of the community.

Additional Discussion. Maureen Cranson wrote the Committee's article for the Town's Annual Report. It was sent to Committee members for review and approval.

It was suggested that the EDC mark the opening of the Library's summer program, the Recreation Department's summer program, etc. in some way – articles, balloons, some sort of fanfare – in order to help keep the EDC visible.

Keith Cordial followed up last month's discussion with information on some of the Town's available properties. This topic will be added to the Committee's monthly agenda. There was also discussion of a warrant article to allow the Committee money to buy properties that come available.

Maureen Cranson moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim Patacchiola seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 11:40.

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for **March 28th at 9:00 am in Room 205 of the Butterick Building.**

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Chalmers, Recorder.