

Town of Bolton
Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Minutes to EDC Meeting
Monday April 4, 2011
Public Forum – Review Survey Results
Town Safety Building

Attendees:

| | |
|--|--|
| Jennifer Atwood Burney, Helene Demmer, Steve George | John Karlon, Lysa Miller, Dina Mazzola, Chris Nelson Eileen Schomp, Bruce Slater |
|--|--|

Non-member attendees: lots

Members not in attendance:

Next meeting: tbd

Purpose of meeting was for Leigh Shanney to present results from EDC survey

Chris Nelson – EDC Chairman – provided an overview:

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) was established to help Bolton attract, retain and grow businesses and jobs in Bolton while improving the economic environment and quality of life for its residents. We are faced with the following civic challenges:

1. Fill vacant commercial space to support local businesses and increase town revenue.
2. Provide revenue strategies for funding projected operating budgets over the next 10 fiscal years.
3. Operate within the framework of preserving community character and quality of life.

The EDC is trying to figure out what the town needs in economic development, while understanding what the residents want and trying to help fill vacant space. In reference to vacant space, the EDC is trying to create positive conditions to help interactions between landlord and tenants. Town Planner helped Bolton become an ETA, which helps the town work with business owners to provide tax incentives for coming to Bolton. Also, the planner has worked with MASS Econ by increasing awareness through their website on opportunities in Bolton.

Some of our existing vacant large commercial space (Future/Atlantic Microwave) is not meant to be multi-tenant and may require landlords to make investments and reconfigure spaces.

Leigh Shanney's presentation of results:

Survey results can be found on the Town of Bolton's Website:

http://www.townofbolton.com/Pages/BoltonMA_Economic/Surveyresults.pdf

547 people responded to the survey, representing 779 adults. An invitation to the survey was mailed with the annual town census which goes to all households in Bolton. The survey was available either online or by hard copies made available at the Town Hall, the Senior Center, and the Bolton Public Library. Announcements were also made on the Town's website, Library bulletin board, local newspapers and the Houghton Building bulletin sign.

** Note that Iris Berdrow had issue with the process relating to hard copies, etc – and questioning whether the process for the invitations to taking the survey was done properly. Leigh reiterated the process and the committee stands by the methodology.

Residents concerns were as follows:

- Fill Vacant space
- Most people would prefer no major retail development in center of town along main street, preferring either non or small retail
- Strong Supports for a village overlay in the 495 area, with some reservations around the guidelines
- The Economic Development Committee needs to be clear on its role/mission
- Not a strong demand for services (ie. Legal, etc)
- Strong demand for food related businesses