

Essex Strategic Planning Committee
April 27, 2016
Essex Senior Center, Pickering Street

Minutes

Members Present: Lisa O'Donnell, Annie Cameron, Charlie McNeil, Bob Coviello, Keith Symmes, Julie Scofield, Peter Madsen, David Gabor – Chair, Mike Burke – Vice Chair

Staff Present: Brendhan Zubricki – Town Administrator, Matt Coogan – Town Planner

The meeting began at 7:05

1. Approval of meeting minutes

- The March 14th meeting minutes were approved by the SPC.

2. Finalization Town Meeting handout

- The SPC reviewed the draft meeting handout created by Matt Coogan that would be distributed at Town Meeting. This handout would update Town residents on the Strategic Planning process and address the warrant article at Town Meeting that would allocate funding to the SPC for public outreach. The SPC voted to approve the edited draft.

3. Discussion of formation of an Economic Development Committee

- The Committee discussed the purpose and the merits of creating a Economic Development Committee (EDC) for the Town. Some of the reasons discussed included creating jobs, “tuning up” the Town’s economic engine, improving infrastructure and creating incentives to promote the local economy. An EDC would be able to implement the economic goals of the Strategic Plan. Brendhan Zubricki mentioned that he has been in touch with Maria DiStefano of the MA Office of Business Development. Ms. DiStefano would be available to discuss an EDC with the SPC at a future meeting. IN addition, Brendhan has been in touch with Jason XX, Congressman Moulton Economic Development, who could also help the Town with an EDC. It was also reported that the Town’s meals tax is up in the last 3 quarters by \$20,000 from the same point last year. The SPC agreed to invite Maria DiStefano to their next meeting in June. The Committee also

nominated Ken Riehl, Bob Coviello, and Charlie McNeil to be members of a future EDC.

4. Consideration of Community Compact Best Practice Areas

- Brendhan explained that the Town has already set up a Community Compact for the town to focus on climate change mitigation. The Town is already working on climate change mitigation. The Town can enter into additional Community Compacts – up to 2 additional study areas. The benefit of the Community Compact is a commitment from the state to partner with the community, potential funding, and technical assistance. The SPC will identify and recommend additional Community Compact areas of concentration at their next meeting, after Town Departments provide their feedback.

5. MDI Downtown Parking Management Study

- Matt Coogan reported that the Town was awarded a Mass. Downtown Initiative grant to conduct a parking study for downtown Essex. The Town will be working with Nelson Nygaard. The plan will look at current parking conditions and create a management plan that will address downtown parking issues. Matt told the SPC to stay tuned for upcoming public meetings and presentations, as well as an online parking survey.

6. Review of goals and actions matrix – finish prioritizing actions

- The SPC continued their discussion of prioritizing the Strategic Plan for action. There was a brief conversation about funds coming from Conomo Point and how those funds will be funded. There was also a brief conversation about upcoming large Town expenditures, including the potential construction of a new elementary school in Manchester and a new public safety building. The SPC decided to task Brendhan and Mat with working together on prioritizing the Strategic Plan goals into a simple document for the SPC to review.

7. Other

- Massachusetts Office of Disability – The Board of Selectmen asked the SPC to review whether the Town needs to create a Disability Commission. Currently the

Building Inspector is the ADA Coordinator for the Town. The SPC decided that there may not be the capacity to create this type of commission at this time. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41.