

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Training Room
March 25, 2015

Minutes

In attendance were the following members of the Economic Development Sub-Committee: Andrew Bissanti Economic Development Committee Chairman, Robert Vallee, Matt Kelly, and Peter Padula. Also in attendance were Town Councilor Judith Pond Pfeffer, Planning Board Chair Anthony Padula, Planning Board Vice Chairman Joseph Halligan, Town Administrator Jeffrey Nutting, Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Taberner, Building Commissioner Gus Brown, Town Planner Beth Wierling, Bruce Lucas from BETA Group, Inc., Sandra Verhaegen, Mr. Scaringella, John Pazniokas, Stephanie Pazniokas, Daniel Grentner, Jeffery Chaffee, Marylyn Chaffee, Gail Irwin, Rob Bailow, and Karen Purvis.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Pond Street

Chairman Bissanti introduced Mr. Nutting who gave an update on Pond Street Property issues. Town staff are assisting the Economic Development Committee assess the type development that may work for the Town-owned property. Increased traffic was one of the more important issues to address while considering the property's development. The Town had its consultant, BETA Group, Inc., assess how different type developments could impact area roadways and intersections. The signalized intersection of Route 140 with Old West Central Street and Franklin Village Drive was the major concern. Bruce Lucas from BETA was introduced who discussed the recently completed traffic assessment of Route 140 (West Central Street) in the vicinity of Old West Central Street and the Franklin Village shopping plaza.

Lucas mentioned BETA's assessment was based on two recently completed studies, and a proposed development concept resulting from a 2014 RFP. The two studies used were a Boston Region MPO Arterial Segments Study (January 2015), and a Traffic Impact and Access Study (2014) for a proposed retail building (so-called Starbucks project) adjacent to the intersection. The written assessment document outlines BETA's findings and recommendations based on the two recent studies, BETA's own analysis of future conditions at the intersection and along Route 140, and the potential for future development. BETA used the November 2013 base data volume collected for the 2014 Traffic Impact and Access Study, which reported higher average daily trips on West Central Street (30,300) and higher entering volumes at the intersection of Rt. 140, Old West Central Street and Franklin Village during the critical PM peak hour. The 2020 Build volumes in the 2014 Traffic Impact and Access Study were used as a 2020 base condition for future development.

The Conclusions portion of BETA's assessment show what most at the meeting already knew; the intersection of Rt. 140 at Old West Central was already a major concern, additional commercial construction (Starbucks) would definitely have a negative impact of the intersection, and additional development at the Pond Street property would likely make things worse.. Mitigation of the potential increases in traffic may be possible, but the intersection will always see heavy traffic. The improvement most likely to have a positive impact on the intersection would be to lengthen Rt. 140's east bound left turn lane and or provide a duel left turn lane.

The Committee members discussed what type of development is appropriate for the property. Sale for commercial Development? R&D and corporate office? Hotel only, and preserving the rest for open space. The issue of developing the Pond Street property for solar was mentioned. There were several residents in favor of the solar concept. The committee mentioned possibly developing two different RFPs. Mr. Nutting mentioned Town staff will continue researching the issue.

A motion was made to move the issue to their next meeting on April 8, 2015. All in favor.

Motion to adjourn. All in favor.