

Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, December 14, 2010 7:00 PM
Town Hall, Harvard, MA

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rich Maiore, Chairman, Al Combs, Jim Higgins, Elaine Lazarus, Bruce Stamski
Bill Johnson (BOS liaison), Jim Stevens

The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Elaine Lazarus to take meeting Minutes.

The Committee reviewed the list of tasks/action items established for the Committee and discussed each.

Economic Target Area (ETA) designation: After a general discussion of the ETA designation, it was decided that Elaine Lazarus and Rich Maiore would work on this item. It was noted that if special legislation is necessary to join the Devens ETA, a town meeting vote would likely be necessary first and that voter education as to the benefits of ETA designation would be important.

Outreach to existing businesses: Jim Higgins suggested soliciting ideas for attracting symbiotic businesses. He added that he would be willing to investigate how to establish a local chamber of commerce. He noted that soliciting information about infrastructure needs could also be important. Al Combs stated he would like to find out if the businesses have any regulatory issues that the Town can assist with. Bill Johnson suggested asking what would make things better for them. Bruce Stamski identified signage as a potential topic for discussion with the businesses. It was noted that the Assessors staff may be able to provide a list of businesses. Jim Higgins offered to talk to a few to get ideas as to what questions to ask, adding that a level of trust with the businesses will need to be established. Also discussed was the need to reach out to the residents in the C district as to their expectations. Higgins and Stevens will take the lead on this item.

Communication: Jim Higgins stated he has received the email distribution list for north Harvard residents, and the Committee will need to communicate to the rest of the community also. Development of a focus group in the future was discussed. Higgins and Stevens will take the lead on resident communication. The Committee discussed using the Town's website to communicate information. Rich Maiore stated he would work on this.

Work with C District Property Owners: Bruce Stamski noted that previous surveys had indicated what people want and asked if the list is viable, and if those businesses want to locate in the C district. Al Combs stated that some businesses have done market

analyses, and if they can share them it would be beneficial. He noted that developers need dependable numbers, and realtors are a good source of information for businesses. Stamski suggested asking them what is lacking and what the Town can provide. Combs suggested talking to realtors to learn about comments and questions they have received from businesses looking to locate here. It was noted that the Committee would follow up on the four development areas identified by EDAT. Combs and Stamski will work on this item.

Sewer: It was noted that connection to Devens needed to be further researched, and that there will need to be follow up with Ayer and Devens. It was stated that this should be coordinated with Tim Bragan. It was noted that with respect to infrastructure, sewer and water is the first priority, traffic the second, and utilities the third. Combs and Stamski will take the lead on the issue.

The next meeting date was set for January 11, 2011.

Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Approved: Jan. 11, 2011