

Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, June 15, 2011 7:00 PM
Old Library, 5 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

MINUTES

Members Present: Rich Maiore, Chairman, Al Combs, Jim Higgins, Elaine Lazarus, Bruce Stamski

Present: Jim Stevens, Joe Hutchinson

- **Minutes**

The Minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

- **New Business**

Ms. Lazarus reviewed the information received to date comparing Harvard's sign restrictions in the C District to similar districts in other communities. The information was discussed, and it was noted that Harvard's restrictions are not at the extreme end, but fairly consistent with the other communities. It was noted that some communities have ways to effectively deal with signs that do not conform to the bylaw requirements to handle unique circumstances, and that Harvard does not have such a mechanism. Mr. Combs suggested identifying what the businesses need and want with respect to signage. It was suggested that the Building Inspector should also be asked if he has received feedback from businesses with respect to signs. It was noted that if 5 or 6 businesses or property owners that have customer contact can be gathered for a discussion of this issue, it would be very beneficial. Ms. Lazarus will continue to gather information on the bylaws of other towns. It was noted that the Committee should begin working with the Planning Board on changes to the sign bylaws soon.

Mr. Maiore reported on the status of a report to the Board of Selectmen on the information gathered from businesses, noting the final changes are being made and then it will be provided to the Board.

Mr. Higgins noted that signage is not the highest priority item, and the main goal was to determine the needs and feelings of businesses, noting the Town will need to attract businesses. He noted that a longer term item that is very important is for the Town to start behaving as if it is not anti-business. All members agreed, and Mr. Maiore noted that the sign issue is one raised by the businesses and it may be the "low hanging fruit" that can be tackled more quickly. He noted that other items are long term and more time consuming, but are equally, if not more important.

Mr. Stamski arrived at this time.

Mr. Stamski stated he has continued to work on the Devens infrastructure connection issue, and distributed his notes from meetings with the Devens Utility Department on March 3, 2011 and June 6, 2011, and preliminary calculations as to water and sewer usage in the Commercial District. He noted that for ballpark estimating purposes, \$125/foot for sewer and water construction costs should be used, based on the numbers he has received from Devens. He noted that using the information in the EDAT report, provided by Devens, and Title 5 flow rates, the Town could be looking at 171,416 gallons per day for a sewer system serving the high priority development identified by EDAT, existing commercial development in the area, homes on Old Mill Road and possible buildout of additional land. He noted that a preliminary estimate of construction costs is \$6,686,400 to serve this area by connecting to Devens via Old Mill Road. Betterment and system management were discussed.

Mr. Maiore reported that a new tab can be added to the Town web site with information for businesses. He reported on the all-boards meeting held the previous evening, noting that the Board of Selectmen is requiring all boards and committees to provide a 5 year vision by September, so the Committee will start discussing this at the next meeting. Mr. Stevens suggested looking at where the Committee wants to be in five years and working back from that. Mr. Combs stated the Committee should find out if the School Committee is looking at building a new school, as there may some linkage with the C district and water and sewer service.

Mr. Higgins stated that his term is up and he would like to become an advisor instead of a full member. Mr. Maiore noted that Mr. Stevens is recommended to fill the position vacated by Mr. Higgins. The Committee thanked Mr. Higgins for his service and expertise during the last year.

Adjourned: 8:05 PM

Documents used at the meeting:

- Draft Minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting
- Signage Information – 6/15/11; prepared by Elaine Lazarus
- Sign Regulations – For districts similar to the C District; prepared by Elaine Lazarus
- Notes from Meeting with Devens Utility Department March 3,2011 and June 6, 2011; prepared by Bruce Stamski
- Preliminary Water & Sewer Usage, Commercial District; dated 6/15/11; prepared by Bruce Stamski

Submitted by: Elaine Lazarus

Approved: