

Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, October 11, 2011 7:00 PM
Old Library, 5 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

MINUTES

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

Others Present: Valerie Hurley, Michelle Catalina

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the September 13, 2011 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

2. ETA Designation Update

Mr. Maiore stated that he recently spoke with Tim Bragan about an update as to the status of the legislation relative to ETA designation, and he will be providing an update and timeline from the legislators.

3. Sign Bylaw

The Committee reviewed information gathered on the sign bylaws of other towns for comparison purposes. The Committee reviewed draft modifications to Harvard's provision on signs in the Protective Bylaw (§ 125-41). Ms. Lazarus noted that she had drafted changes to the first section that sets out the general purpose of the bylaw to take a positive approach rather than a negative approach, so that the bylaw says what the Town wants more than what it does not want. She noted that additional provisions relating to nonmoving and nonflashing signs should be added to address new lighting and animated signs that have appeared elsewhere. Other changes included moving definitions from the Signs section of the bylaw into the main definitions section and wording changes for clarity. In order to address a need expressed by C district businesses that the maximum size of standing signs is too small for multi-tenant properties, a change to 30 sq. ft. from 20 sq. ft. was discussed. A provision authorizing the issuance of a special permit to allow additional or larger signage was discussed.

Mr. Maiore noted that the few businesses that commented on signage had identified window signs, sign size and multi-tenant properties as issues. The Committee discussed how the changes could address some of those issues. Ms. Catalina stated she would take the draft to the Planning Board for feedback. It was decided that Ms. Lazarus would work on a revised draft for the next meeting.

The Committee discussed how to involve the businesses in the process for changing the bylaw, as their input would be important. It was suggested that they could be invited to a meeting to provide feedback on the changes.

4. Other Business

- The Committee discussed providing an update to businesses via a letter, to let them know what the Committee has been doing.
- Mr. Maiore suggested looking at the Town of Littleton web site, which has good information on the Economic Development page.
- Mr. Maiore stated he will be working on an update to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board in November, which will incorporate education elements for town boards and officials with respect to the need for a positive posture toward business on the part of the town government.

Adjourned: 8:25 PM

Approved:

Documents used at the meeting:

- Document entitled “Sign Regulations” dated October 6, 2011
- Document entitled “Suggested Modifications” dated October 8, 2011
- Minutes of the EDC 9/13/11 meeting
- Meeting agenda