

Economic Development Committee

Thursday, March 16, 2013 7:00 PM
Old Library, 5 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

MINUTES

Attendees: EDC Members - Elaine Lazarus, Bruce Stamski, Duncan "Sandy" Chapman, Jim Stevens

Board of Selectmen liaison – Bill Johnson

Planning Board representative – Tim Schmoyer

EDC Member Absent: Rich Maiore

The meeting opened with a discussion of the Grocery Store white paper and disconnect with the January 31, 2013 Minutes. The white paper was approved with the addition of a new paragraph on towns similar to Harvard with a grocery store.

The Committee then discussed potential project ideas including need to scope the zoning for a grocery store. The purpose is to determine if more flexible zoning is necessary and if the building size would change how the zoning is affected. Since there are various sizes, a possible option is to have the prospective chains provide zoning input. To this end, a recommendation was made to review the zoning schematics and engage stores to identify best practices and ideas for potential zoning changes. Mr. Stamski agreed to review the zoning schematics, Mr. Chapman will finalize a letter to land owners with information from the Assessors and Ms. Lazarus and Mr. Stevens will try and meet representatives from Hannaford's.

The Committee reviewed Mr. Chapman's draft letter to property owners within the C-District. A discussion ensued with recommended changes to wording. Mr. Johnson suggested changing the picture on the letter to the official Town Seal and removing his name from the letter as he will step down from the BOS when his term expires.

The minutes from January 31, 2013 were approved by unanimous vote with the modification discussed earlier.

The Committee discussed its participation at Town Meeting, especially support of a Town Planner. The Committee recognized a need to distinguish the responsibilities of Liz Allard from the objectives of a Town Planner to avoid duplication of work.

Mr. Johnson brought up the MRPC CEDS opportunity for obtaining funding for certain projects that create jobs. Mr. Johnson gave a review of the Board of Selectman discussion and options with respect to this item. It was noted that the BOS did not decide if the projects were ready for submission and were waiting for the Planning Board representative to MRPC to provide additional information. Mr. Johnson suggested the EDC work with the MRPC rep. to further this effort. Three projects discussed by the BOA which are under consideration are:

- Road improvements (CDM report) on Ayer Rd.;
- Planning for commercial development in the C-District; and
- Parking in town center.

It was stated that the BOS has not supported the submissions to date. Discussion focused on the parking issue and where overflow parking could be in Town Center, such as near the Bromfield School. Uncertain, though, is whether there is a deadline for project submission. It was stated that since the BOS will have a change in June, it's important for the EDC and Planning Board to keep advancing the agenda and be key supporters of sending all 3 projects to MPRC. It was agreed the EDC should coordinate with the Planning Board to determine whether to advance these projects.

Adjourned: 8:30 PM

Approved: September 16, 2013

Documents used at the meeting:

Meeting agenda

Grocery Store White Paper Draft March, 2013

Draft minutes of the EDC meeting on 1/31/13

Draft letter dated March 1, 2013 to property owners within the C District from the EDC