

TOWN OF STOW
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the December 8, 2016 Economic Development and Industrial Commission Meeting

Members Present: Tom Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Kevin Whalen

Absent: Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein, Rich Eckel

Kevin Whalen called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2016

Kevin Whalen moved to approve the minutes as written.

Tom Farnsworth seconded.

VOTED: (4-0) Unanimously in favor (Tom Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Kevin Whalen -Yea).

Members' Updates

None.

Member Resignation and Vote on Chair

Jesse Steadman shared an email from Rich Eckel stating that he would like to step down as Chair and move to vice chair, nominating Kevin Whalen as Chair.

Serena Howlett moved to make Kevin Whalen Chair of the EDIC.

Bob Collings Seconded.

VOTED: (4-0) Unanimously in favor (Tom Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Kevin Whalen- Yea).

Serena Howlett moved to make Rich Eckel Vice Chair of the EDIC.

Bob Collings Seconded

VOTED: (4-0) Unanimously in favor (Tom Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Kevin Whalen- Yea).

Jesse Steadman said that staff have been alerted to Mannie Afonso's forthcoming resignation letter, and that the vacancy will be posted to see if there is interest from the public or from any associate member in joining the Commission.

Debrief of Discussion with Sarah Cressy, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce

Serena Howlett summarized the conversation with Sarah Cressy, saying that it will be important for the EDIC to figure out what is unique about Stow's economic opportunities and to capitalize on those elements.

Follow up on Business Directory

The EDIC discussed what aspects of developing a current business directory would be under their purview, agreeing on the importance of keeping an updated directory online.

Serena Howlett suggested that a directory may be more useful to the public if it were organized by category of service, rather than alphabetically.

The EDIC agreed that data detailing online usage of the directory could help to find ways of improving the site and its usability. Jesse Steadman said that staff could contact Ron Eld to see if background data is available.

Follow up on 124 Great Road

Serena Howlett debriefed her telephone conversation from October 26th with the project manager from Kleinfelder, the company carrying out the site remediation at 124 Great Road. Serena Howlett said she was encouraged by the conversation and would like to know what can be done to encourage the process.

The EDIC agreed that they would like to learn more about the project and to invite Kleinfelder to a future meeting to discuss what may be possible on the site in regard to a public water supply.

The EDIC discussed a similar site in Bolton which was converted to a park.

Follow up on new businesses

Jesse Steadman said that welcome letters were sent to 6 new businesses in the Lower Village, describing the EDIC's work, inviting the owners to meetings, and welcoming them to Stow.

Jesse Steadman said that a representative from a storage company is looking for a site for a new location, needing 3 acres of usable space with high visibility. The EDIC discussed potential sites in Stow.

The EDIC discussed how to draw employees to Stow, noting that large employers have said that restaurants and transportation are key. The Commission discussed the importance of the last mile connection, and that perhaps there is an opportunity to provide a shuttle from the Acton commuter rail station to large employers. The EDIC agreed that they are interested in reaching out to Bose to ask about their transportation needs, as well as alerting them to road improvements in Lower Village.

Follow up on signage bylaw discussion

Bob Collings and the EDIC discussed the need for expert opinion on the sign bylaw and would like to look into the potential for a consulting firm to provide assistance with recommendations for signage in business districts.

Lower Village Traffic Improvements

The EDIC discussed the 100% design from engineers at Howard Stein Hudson for the improvements to the Lower Village corridor.

Discussion of Work Plan

The EDIC looked over a draft of a work plan, and agreed that it should be reviewed more thoroughly once all members are present.

The next meeting will be held on January 12, 2017.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys