



Town of Westminister

MASSACHUSETTS 01473

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Economic Development Committee – Meeting Minutes for June 5, 2013

Present: Richelle Brown, Joe Serio, John Fairbanks, and Bud Taylor. Staff: Stephen Wallace, Town Planner and Karen Murphy, Town Administrator. Special Guest: Peter Abair of the MA Biotechnology Council.

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM

The first order of business was hearing a presentation from Peter Abair of the MA Biotechnology Council, a trade group representing the biotech industry in Massachusetts. Peter gave a PowerPoint presentation showing how the biotech industry has grown dramatically in the past twenty years, the types of jobs they support, the contribution of biotech to the State's economy, where biotech firms are located in the State, and the prognosis for future growth. During the question and answer session, EDC member Bud Taylor asked what we (the Town) could do to attract biotech firms to Westminister. It would help to have the Board of Health's regulations incorporate the biotech guidelines of the National Institute of Health (NIH). Peter noted that the majority of biotech firms choose to locate close to Cambridge, MA, which is the biotech hub of the State. However, the UMass Medical Center in Worcester is attracting new biotech companies and it's possible that more are on the way. It will be up to the Town to seek out new and existing biotech companies and then make our "sales pitch" for locating in Westminister. Peter said it was important to reach out to commercial real estate brokers and the builders of biotech space as well as biotech companies. Peter said he could provide us with contact information for these entities. The presentation concluded just after 8 PM, and the EDC then moved onto its regular business.

Motion to approve previous meeting minutes, AIF

The EDC reviewed the promotional map idea and came to agreement on a design concept. The map will be on the front and will depict the various resources that Westminister wants to promote. The back of the map will contain details for each resource listed, such as: location, type of business, hours of operation, contact information and web link (if available). The Town Planner will try to develop a cost estimate for map design and printing in time for the next EDC meeting in August.

The EDC then discussed the idea of sending a one-page survey to all businesses in Town and used the one-page survey from the January Economic Summit as a starting point. The EDC hopes the survey results will help the Town understand just how helpful our municipal government is in helping our businesses thrive and prosper. The Town Planner noted that the cost of sending the survey to every business in Town along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope would be approximately \$200 and this cost could be absorbed between the Planning Department and Planning Board budgets. The EDC members will have until its August meeting to finalize the survey questions.

The last order of business was discussing the need to recruit some new members.

The EDC will meet again next on Wednesday August 7, 2013, at 7:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.