

# MEETING MINUTES

## 6 1. Call to Order

7 Chair RA called the meeting to order at 6:44 pm.

**8 EDC present:** Rob Anderson (RA), Khoi Nguyen (KN), Michael Moorehead (MM), Michael Nordstrom (MN)

9 **Town/Contract Staff present:** EDC Coordinator Leah Emerson (LE), Consultant Claire Reynolds (CR)

**10 Attendees present:** Selectman Sam Stivers (SS), Planning Board Member and MPIC Chair Debbie DeMuria (DD),

**11 Conservation Commission and Stewardship Committee Member Kevin Farrington (KF), and resident Bonnie**

## 12 Phaneuf (BP)

## 13 2. Reports

14 a. Chair

15 **Term end, One Stop, Route 9 and Life Sciences** | Rob Anderson (RA) reminded the EDC that his term was ending at  
16 the end of June 2024. He [emailed his concerns to the Select Board](#) about his disappointment with the Town's lack  
17 of interest in the pursuit of [One Stop grants](#) and underscored the importance of the Master Plan for economic  
18 development. Having recently attended a Worcester Business Journal (WBJ) life science event in Worcester, RA  
19 mentioned that John Weaver from MA Biomedical Initiatives emphasized the need for long-term planning and  
20 commitment to attracting businesses and talent. Despite Southborough's lack of wastewater treatment capacity,  
21 RA further emphasized the importance of housing as a component of an economic development strategy to attract  
22 companies like Moderna. RA underscored that housing is a vital component to economic development along with  
23 the need for mixed use development along Route 9.

## 24 b. Members

25 **Data collection and MTC's 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey** | Khoi Nguyen (KN) reported on his consultation  
26 with Matt Probst, Chair of the Town's Municipal Technology Committee (MTC), to analyze the data from the latest  
27 [Community Satisfaction Survey](#). KN discussed the survey structure employed by Survey Monkey, with the goal of  
28 tracking trends year-over-year. KN will assist the MTC as time permits. MN added that collected data is only useful  
29 inasmuch as it's utilized and applied.

30

31 As a data manager for a firm in Boston, KN expressed surprise at the lack of automation capabilities for business  
32 data in Southborough. KN [created a table with current sources](#) of business data / information and reviewed the  
33 limitations of each. As LE explained, the Town Clerk only collects 'doing business as' applications for issuance of  
34 [DBA certificates](#), the Town does not collect information from larger corporate and other legal business entities.  
35 That information is submitted to the Secretary of State William Galvin's [Corporations Division](#). The Corporations  
36 Division website database has -0- capabilities to search entities by Town / zip code.

37

38 Another resource is the State Dept. of Economic Research ([DER Employer Locator](#)), which is sometimes inaccurate  
39 and outdated, as well as the Town Assessor's tax roles. The latter's information is limited to name / address, with  
40 email, current phone numbers, contacts and web URL addresses **unaccounted for**. This makes compiling local  
41 business information and keeping it complete, up-to-date and accurate more time intensive and challenging. RA  
42 volunteered that the state is implementing a new 'front door' business database, and although incomplete and a  
43 work-in-progress, it could be another resource to contribute up-to-date business information.

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44 c. EDC Coordinator

45 Being the first EDC meeting since Town Meeting, LE reported that the [EDC FY25 budget](#) passed without debate for  
46 EDC members who were unable to attend. LE then mentioned her outreach to Southborough regional planning  
47 agency (RPA) Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to ensure Southborough's data is included in reports,  
48 when applicable, going forward. LE felt that Southborough's needs have more in common with Central MA Regional  
49 Planning Council (CMRPC) work and culture, rather than their assigned RPA MAPC, which is heavily focused on  
50 greater Boston.

51

52 **MBTA Communities** | LE briefly mentioned upcoming public meetings being held by the Planning Board re: MBTA  
53 Communities and thanked Planning Board member and Master Plan Implementation Committee EDC liaison  
54 Debbie DeMuria and her husband Kevin Farrington for attending the EDC meeting.

55

56 **Trottier Civics Student Proposal** | LE shared that she and Selectmen Al Hamilton and Andrew Dennington met with  
57 8th grade Trottier civics students to discuss a student project proposal they wanted to pitch to the EDC, which they  
58 [sent via email](#). During and shortly after her meeting with the students, LE provided alternatives and suggestions for  
59 the graduating students' proposal, but they were settled on a business fair in concept. Unfortunately, they were  
60 graduating and unable to assist in planning and executing the endeavor. RA thought utilizing social media to reach a  
61 wider audience through a virtual business fair might provide more benefit. The group then discussed the need for  
62 local workforce development, particularly for youth, and the need for employees in the life science industry and in  
63 municipal government. KN thought that high school students would be well suited to take on a project and follow  
64 through with it, and suggested hosting a future job fair at a school campus, inviting local industry leaders to speak  
65 with students along those lines. KN and the group expressed interest in exploring that idea further, while  
66 demurring on the student proposal for a spring 2025 business fair due to lead time and limited capacity.

67

68 **One Stop grant EOI and app update** | LE sought to address community concerns about stockpiled material on a  
69 vacant lot downTown and learned the material was leftover from the Town's street improvement project along  
70 School Street, suggesting some culpability for remediation, removal and disposal by the Town. LE had discussed  
71 potential grant opportunities with Town Administration for downtown improvements. She also suggested bundling  
72 Flagg School with 21 Highland for a more competitive future grant application once the newly formed 21 Highland  
73 Use Committee is further along in their plans for the property. RA reiterated that multiple [expressions of interest](#)  
74 (EOI) and grant applications can and should be submitted, and expressed frustration with the Town's lack of  
75 engagement in the process, with the EOI window since closed. RA said that the Town should have submitted an EOI  
76 and explained the reasons: 1) It lets the State know that the Town is looking to take advantage of the One Stop  
77 program 2) it is non-binding 3) the Town receives feedback and 4) it gets the application process moving.  
78 RA and CR discussed potential zoning changes to support economic development and considered it a missed  
79 opportunity to submit an EOI for a grant to review zoning along the Route 9 corridor. RA insisted that a corridor  
80 study similar to one prepared by RKG Associates in conjunction with MassDevelopment for [Rt. 138 in Canton](#)  
81 should be conducted for Route 9.

82

83 **Master Plan Implementation Goals** | LE suggested taking a fresh look at activities and master plan goals beyond  
84 zoning and sewer capacity that the EDC can turn their focus on in the interim. MN again wondered why zoning  
85 along Route 9 wasn't being optimized. He repeated his request for an EDC tracker to prioritize tasks based on  
86 importance. LE explained the challenges in tracking developments due to the non-linear nature of Master Plan  
87 goals and other objectives with complex interdependencies. LE emphasized that these things may change based on  
88 feedback from the Planning Board and others. LE asked MN to help create and maintain the tracker, given his  
89 request, then reiterated that the implementation goals may shift, and she may not always have time to explain the

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90 changes to the committee given her half-time position. Despite that, LE pledged to work on pulling together a draft  
91 tracker for the EDC's use at future meetings. RA noted LE's frustration with varying weekly but limited hours to  
92 meet the job's ongoing demands and requirements. RA advocated for a full-time person for economic development  
93 and grant writing. RA believes a single person should handle both roles for maximum efficiency. SS agreed while CR  
94 expressed doubt that this would happen anytime soon. KN asked who the EDC needed to speak to and lobby to  
95 make that happen. RA suggested KN and MN speak to Alan Belniak, who also advocated for a FT EDC coordinator  
96 position, and who could provide valuable insights based on his experience.

97

98 **Remaining EDC FY24 budget funds** | LE proposed using EDC budget funds for committee member training, given  
99 RA and MM's departure. Chair RA is a longtime economic development professional and MM is a licensed architect.  
100 She pointed out that newer members with different professional backgrounds need support and resources to get  
101 up to speed and suggested having a focused Zoom meeting to discuss the application of remaining FY24 EDC  
102 budget funds. RA and LE then referred to a potential EDC recruit and hoped that Sam Stivers (SS) would be hearing  
103 from them and potentially interviewing them soon.

104

## 105 4. Public Comment

106 Resident and former Selectman Bonnie Phaneuf (BP) expressed frustration with the lack of progress in addressing  
107 housing issues, despite having potential solutions and resources. LE asked if BP could introduce her to members of  
108 the housing authority to better understand their perspective and work together to that end. LE said that Al  
109 Hamilton and SHOPC had been working long and hard to bring more affordable housing to Southborough and were  
110 also frustrated with the lack of progress.

111

112 Resident Claire Reynolds (CR) asked RA whether there are 13 agencies involved in administering the [One Stop grant program](#). RA clarified that there are 13 grants, not 13 agencies, involved. RA further explained the simplified  
113 [program](#). RA clarified that there are 13 grants, not 13 agencies, involved. RA further explained the simplified  
114 expression of interest (EOI) process for grant applications, with potential for multiple submissions, and that it was a  
115 disadvantage not to submit an EOI to gain feedback to better prepare a full grant application, due the first week of  
116 June 2024. CR stated that she had spoken to the Select Board (SB) in May 2023 when she was acting as the interim  
117 EDC Coordinator. The SB said they would apply the following year, May 2024. Their reason for delay was that they  
118 wanted to start the process earlier and get more boards and committees involved. CR said the SB gave the same  
119 reason for not submitting an EOI as they did in 2023, begin earlier and involve the Planning Board (PB). CR  
120 reiterated that this never happened, even though LE, on behalf of the EDC, [presented to the PB](#) in Dec 2023 to  
121 request working with them toward Master Plan goals related to zoning changes on Route 9.

## 122 5. Administrative

123 A. Approval of 11/29/23 and 12/20/23 meeting minutes

124 **MOTION:** RA moved to approve the meeting minutes from 11/29/23 and 12/20/23, seconded by MN.

125 **DISCUSSION:** None

126 **VOTE:** M Moorehead-Aye, M Nordstrom-Aye, K Nguyen-Aye, R Anderson-Aye (4-0-0)

127

128 B. Scheduled next meetings – Wed. 5/22/24 at 11 am and Mon. 6/10/24 at 6:30 PM

129

## 130 6. Adjourn

131 **MOTION:** MM moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 pm, and seconded by RA.

132 M Moorehead-Aye, M Nordstrom-Aye, K Nguyen-Aye, R Anderson-Aye (4-0-0)

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133 REFERENCED ITEMS | DOCUMENTS at 5/15/24 EDC Meeting

134

- 135 1) [R. Anderson Resignation, dated 5/14/24](#)
- 136 2) [MA One Stop for Growth grant program](#)
- 137 3) [MTC 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey](#)
- 138 4) [K. Nguyen Business Contact email](#), dated 4/2/24
- 139 5) [EDC DBA List](#)
- 140 6) Secretary of the Commonwealth [Corporations Division website](#)
- 141 7) Dept. of Economic Research [Employer Locator](#)
- 142 8) [EDC FY25 Budget](#)
- 143 9) [Trottier Civics Student Business Fair Proposal email](#), dated 4/22/25
- 144 10) Community One Stop for Growth [Expression of Interest](#)
- 145 11) [Route 138 Corridor Study SAMPLE REPORT](#), 2020
- 146 12) [Aspirations for Route 9](#), presentation to Planning Board, Dec 2023