

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, September 16, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
Online via Zoom

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

EDC Chair Michael Nordstrom called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

EDC present: Karen Anglim (KA), Khoi Nguyen (KN), Michael Nordstrom (MN)

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

2. Reports

a) **Chair** | Michael Nordstrom (MN) briefed the EDC on his first Corridor 9-495 Chamber of Commerce event, which he and Leah Emerson (LE) attended on 8/22/24. He was introduced to Chamber President Karen Chapman, who recently joined the Westborough EDC. LE shared that Karen is a longtime ally and advocate for area businesses and can be counted on for her support of a single tax rate classification in Southborough.

b) **Members** | Karen Anglim (KA) shared that the owner of Hashtag Beauty Salon, Roberta Terencio, was unable to find space that worked with her move-by date from Town Center Plaza. It was assumed that her lease wasn't renewed so that the LL, Capital Group Properties, could replace them with a higher paying tenant. KA said that Roberta found space for her salon business in Westborough off Lyman Street. LE added that although Roberta and Stronger Uprising Personal Training were unable to find alternative locations in Southborough and moved to Westborough as a result, local art gallery Apothecary Artists and Root to Rise pilates studio, were both staying on locally after she assisted in finding suitable locations where the zoning supported each use, verified by both planning and the building commissioner.

c) **Coordinator Report** | LE shared that she met with the new building commissioner and zoning enforcement officer, Chris Lund, the week prior, who previously worked in Northborough. She'd received positive feedback re: Mr. Lund's contributions, including a 'zoning information request' that can be submitted online through the building dept. website, streamlining the determination process between planning and building when business owners and residents need zoning bylaw interpretation and guidance. LE felt confident Mr. Lund could make recommendations for zoning bylaw updates in areas that need it most, based on his weekly experience in the field as the zoning enforcement officer responsible for code and bylaw compliance.

LE gave an overview of draft [branding-promotion-recruitment](#) materials she'd been working on, Citizen Planner Training Collaborative | [CPTC training](#) courses for the fall, as well as opportunities for [Open Meeting Law training](#), which she encouraged the EDC to pursue for better understanding and compliance. She also shared that Southborough's regional planning agency, MAPC, was offering a series of community engagement training webinars each month from noon to one o'clock. LE felt it was relevant to their outreach and relationship building with both residents and businesses. Lastly, she said that the 495-Metrowest Partnership's Planning and Economic Development Working Group | PEDWG would be meeting in person the third Thurs. in Oct. at 3 pm and would update them on the venue once it was decided upon. LE, Claire Reynolds (CR) and former EDC Chair Rob Anderson (RA) are regular attendees at PEDWG's monthly meetings, which are mostly held via Zoom except a few times a year.

3. Administrative

a) **EDC Tracker** | The committee went over their internal tracker per line item updates (attached). Members discussed the need for EDC webpage updates on the town website as well as the need to determine committee priorities in the near term. It was suggested that the best opportunity to go over webpage updates as a group would be to set-up an EDC working session rather than a regular EDC meeting. LE

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directed them to a spreadsheet she created assessing economic development in nearby towns (attached), including links to corresponding websites, so that EDC members could evaluate what they liked and didn't like to guide and inform their own efforts.

In addition to updating the EDC webpages, KA also felt it important to be more visible around town at meetings and events. LE had already been to two meetings and had put in double her 19.5 hrs at 40 hrs for the week. Having reviewed old EDC minutes, she noted that in times past her predecessor had a larger and more active committee which took on commitments each month, both individually and collectively. She cited one example when the EDC divided up boards and committees among them in order to track developments that were consequential to the EDC's efforts, either by attending meetings or reviewing them after the fact. LE stressed the limits on people's time, since many to most have full-time day jobs, extracurricular activities, and family commitments. She reasoned that the town's 55 boards and committees don't often collaborate as well as they could due to time constraints and limited capacity.

KA asked if outside board and committee members might also attend EDC meetings. LE replied that Selectman Sam Stivers attends whenever possible, except that evening they encountered technical difficulties with the Zoom set-up. She also pointed out that Planning Board Chair Meme Luttrell and Planning Board member Debbie DeMuria attended EDC meetings in March and May 2024 respectively and that all are welcome. LE offered that if the EDC wanted to speak with Select Board members outside their bi-monthly meetings they can attend Select Board office hours. Likewise, if they have questions for the Town Administrator, Mark Purple, and/or his executive assistant Melanie Otsuka, they could set up a meeting per their availability. LE asked if KN had any availability in Oct besides 10/16, since KA had a conflict, but he was unable to confirm given an unusually busy work month. Regardless, LE said she would resend a scheduling poll to set up the next meeting for either Oct or Nov.

The group segued to Claire Reynolds (CR) who provided some background on the EOEEA funded wastewater reports from Weston & Sampson and Lombardo Associates. KN asked who had received a copy and LE confirmed that the Select Board was in receipt. She said she would also make the reports available on the EDC webpage along with future updates as time allowed. CR and LE felt it important to continue furthering the work on that front, which might be supported by additional grant funding. CR continues to advocate for a One Stop grant application for a Route 9 corridor study, which would assess traffic, safety, commercial vacancy and use, housing, wastewater and recommended updates to the town's commercial zoning bylaws post-pandemic. LE said that more than one One Stop application can be submitted, there is no limit, and that furthering wastewater solutions could be pursued through a separate application as needed, to which CR agreed.

4. Discussion

- a) [9/30/24 Town Meeting](#) - LE summarized what was needed to prepare Town Meeting materials in advance, for both posting and hard copy takeaways to promote making the EDC coordinator position full-time. After some confusion by EDC members as to which article number this was assigned on the 9/30/24 Town Warrant, it was confirmed to be Article 14. LE pledged to provide her current scope of work and an expanded scope of work once the hours are increased for the position beginning in Jan 2025. She needed CR's help to tie that into the EDC's overall efforts and contributions demonstrating the EDC's value since the committee was established. Given CR's involvement as a former EDC member and as interim EDC coordinator, LE stressed the value of CR's historical knowledge and why continuity, including knowledge of efforts to-date, are important in making the case in support of a full-time coordinator position.
- b) **Contracted Services** | CR expanded on the grant awards the EDC had successfully obtained over the years, pointing out that the EDC had made net positive contributions in excess of their cumulative annual budget from 2017 onward. She also emphasized that the EDC directly paid for the state's grant match requirement on a number of grants, with either in-kind hours and/or EDC budget monies. Both she and LE felt the financial figures should be provided on a fact sheet for Town Meeting attendees to consider. Given

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LE's scheduling limitations and half-time hours, MN agreed that short term assistance was needed to prepare Town Meeting materials, given he and the other members' more recent tenure. KN asked what would occur if the full \$1,000 was not billed against. LE replied that it would simply remain available in the EDC's FY25 budget under the 'other contracted services' category to be applied as-needed.

MOTION: MN made a motion to approve a not-to-exceed contract with CCR Consulting in the amount of \$1,000 to assist in preparation of 9/30/24 Town Meeting presentation materials, seconded by KA.

APPROVED: M Nordstrom-Aye, K Anglim-Aye, K Nguyen-Aye (3-0-0)

c) **Approval of prior Meeting Minutes** | MN and KA reviewed and endorsed the June - August draft meeting minutes, but KN needed more time to review draft minutes from July and August. LE said she could post the July and August draft minutes and have the committee approve them at their next meeting. KA wanted to make sure that was adhered to so that the committee would be current per the Town Clerk's 45-day posting requirements.

MOTION: KA made a motion to approve the EDC's 6/10/24 draft meeting minutes, seconded by KN.

APPROVED: K Anglim-Aye, K Nguyen-Aye, M Nordstrom-Aye (3-0-0)

Zoning Updates | LE briefed the committee on the Planning Board's preliminary discussion of potential zoning updates at their 9/9/24 meeting. These included housekeeping updates in one or two sections of the zoning bylaw re: age restricted housing and the omission of references to SHOPC (pending the dissolution and reorganization of SHOPC); expanded uses in the Industrial Park (IP) zoning district that support post-pandemic needs, uses and activities; ADU provisions; and granting the Planning Board oversight and authority over special permit applications that also require minor or major site plan approval. LE said that she'd be meeting with the building commissioner, planning, and one or two Select Board members to discuss these short term changes that could be included on the annual spring Town Meeting Warrant in April 2025. She promised to keep the EDC updated. LE concluded that a business and asset inventory by geographic area - Cordaville-Southville, Route 9 East, Route 9 West and Downtown and environs, the latter of which she'd already completed - would be an important task to assist the EDC's efforts, particularly with ongoing relationship building and outreach. She emphasized the importance of zoning, and the need to understand zoning provisions at the local level, to continue advocating for needed zoning bylaw amendments, particularly along Route 9.

5. Public Comment

None.

Next Meeting | Oct and Nov EDC meetings TBD pending scheduling poll results among EDC members.

6. Adjourn

MOTION: MN moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm, seconded by KA.

K Anglim, M Nordstrom-Aye, K Nguyen *left meeting early* (2-1-0)

REFERENCED ITEMS | DOCUMENTS at 9/16/24 EDC Meeting

1) EDC Tracker spreadsheet, 9/24

2) Economic Development in Nearby Communities spreadsheet, 9/24

Category	Responsible Party	Tasks - Goals - Objectives	Issues-Obstacles	Actions	Partners-Contacts	Projected Completion
Meeting Protocol	MN, KN, KA, LE	Review Robert's Rules of Order for basic understanding of meeting practices and protocols for timely, orderly meetings	Common issues		Vanessa Hale MMA	Ongoing
Zoning	KN	Take Planetizen course " How Zoning Shapes Cities, Communities and Regions " by Jenny Schuetz	In order to have an informed discussion re: economic development, businesses and potential businesses in Southborough, a basic understanding of zoning, its history, application and current zoning-related issues, this course is required . EDC members should also familiarize themselves with Southborough zoning and its basic provisions, use restrictions and dimensional requirements within current local bylaws.	EDC approved \$3k for Planetizen as a training and educational resource for the EDC, the PB, and some members of the ZBA through 6/25. Karen Anglim completed the course as requested by the 7/18/24 EDC meeting. Michael completed course. Please avail yourself of this resource.	Planetizen Rep Victor Castillo	8/7/24
EDC	MN, KN, KA	EDC recruitment	Time / opportunity / suitability. Reminder: all current EDC member's terms end on 6/30/25	LE is working on EDC branded items for the committee to be presented by or before the 9/24 EDC meeting (below)	CCR, VA, MP, SB	5/25
EDC	LE	Create draft welcome postcard for businesses relocated to and recently opened in Southborough	Need to fine tune logo in vector program (Affinity Designer or Inkscape)	See draft marketing materials for samples.	EDC	10/24
EDC	LE	Website updates	Time constraints, needs an overhaul / updates / reorganization.	Reviewed Economic Development and organizational structure in 17 nearby cities and towns, and created a spreadsheet in the process with hyperlinks to municipal websites. Some are worse than ours, some are better. Good exercise as an overview, providing ideas for website updates.	IT	Ongoing
EDC	MN, KA, KN	Review Lombardo Associates Wastewater Management Action Plan for Route 9 and DT Southborough	Need Select Board review, guidance on next steps, with the SB taking the lead on wastewater solutions.	EOEEA grant project manager Claire Reynolds furnished the final report 8/9/24. Provided the SB with both W & S and Lombardo Associates wastewater reports on 9/10/24 .	CCR Select Board	9/24
EDC	MN, KA, KN, LE	Review 9/30/24 Town Meeting Warrant	Attendance at Town Meeting	Attend Town Meeting and VOTE!	Select Board	9/30/24
Town	EDC SB	The Municipal Empowerment Act bill gives municipalities the option to increase their hotel, motel, and other rental tax from 6% to 7%, and their meal tax from the set .75% to 1% . Does the EDC want to advocate this to the SB to consider? Meal tax revenue : FY23 \$119,348 FY24 \$124,718 a 4.5% year-over-year increase	Time and Town priorities	Research specifics	Town Admin Select Board	3/25

n Municipal Staff, Departments, Agencies & Committees																	
Pop.	No. of Busin esses	Tax Rate	Nearby Towns & Cities	EcDev Staff	Status	Plan- ning Staff	Status	Staff Department	Principal Contact	Position	Steered by	Membership	Business Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Advocacy Groups	Projects Initiatives	Business Improvement District?		
10,429	501	13.76	- Southborough Economic Development Committee	1	PT	2	FT	Economic Development Town Admin	Leah Emerson	Economic Development Coordinator	Econ Development Committee Town Admin Select Board	3 2 vacancies	-	Shop SOBO Permitting Guide Downtown Initiative	-		
22,012	1,208	16.41	1 Westborough Economic Development Committee	1	FT	5	FT	Community Development Department	*Hiring for FT Coordinator Position	Economic Development Coordinator	Economic Development Committee	7	Corridor 9-495 Regional Chamber of Commerce 495-MetroWest Partnership		-		
18,591	543	13.24	2 Ashland Economic Development	1	FT	2	FT	Economic Development Department	Beth Reynolds	Director of Economic Development & Community Outreach	N/A	N/A	Ashland Business Association		-		
36,518	1,643	12.26	4 Natick Community & Economic Development	1	FT	6	FT	Community & Economic Development Department	Morgan Griffiths	Transportation & Economic Development Planner	Economic Development Committee	10			Natick Center Cultural District		
19,394	749	14.61 21.16	5 Sudbury EDC established 1999, disbanded in 2008	1	FT	5	FT	Planning & Community Development	*Hiring EcDev Consultant FT Coord.	Economic Development Coordinator	TBD	-	Sudbury Chamber of Commerce		-		
18,086	766	13.13 12.24	6 Concord Economic Vitality & Tourism	2	FT	5	FT	Economic Vitality & Tourism Division	Mimi Graney	Economic Vitality Manager	Economic Vitality Committee	13	VisitConcord.org	Concord 250	-		
71,875	2,692	12.46 25.41	3 Framingham Economic Development & Industrial Corporation	3	FT	5	FT	Community & Economic Development Division	Rick McKenna	Business Outreach Manager	EDIC Community Development Committee Planning Board	7 9 5	Metrowest Chamber of Commerce		-		
41,179	1,824	10.24 17.66	7 MEDC Marlborough Economic Development Corporation	4	FT			Quasi-Public Agency	Meredith Harris	Executive Director	Board of Directors Executive Committee	23 8			-		
41,179	1,824		MCDA Marlborough Community Development Authority Planning Board Site Plan Review Committee ZBA			3	FT	Inspectional Services	Tin Htway	Building Commissioner Zoning Enforcement Officer Acting City Planner	Chptr 121 Agency City Boards & Committee	9 7 6 4					
19,904	743	14 27.5	8 Hudson Economic Development Commission			3	FT	Planning & Community Development Department	Kristina Johnson, AICP	Director of Planning & Community Development	Economic Development Commission	6 3 vacancies	Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce Hudson Business Association		DT BID		
15,689	671	14.28	9 Northborough			2	FT	Planning Department	Laurie Connors	Planning Director	Planning Board	5			-		
19,975	455	14.31	10 Grafton Economic Development Commission			2	FT	Planning Department	Fiona Coughlin	Town Planner	Econ Development Commission Planning Board	6 5					
8,311	233	13.68	11 Upton Economic Development			2	FT	Land Use & Inspectional Services	Michael Antonellis	Town Planner Dir of Inspectional Services	Planning Board Econ Development Committee	6 5					
38,889	1,114	12.28	12 Shrewsbury Economic Development			2	FT	Chptr 493 Org Planning & EcDev Dept	Christopher McGoldrick	Director of Planning & Economic Development	SDC Planning Board	7 6	Lakeway Business District Shrewsbury Town Center Association		-		
19,540	649	14.61	13 Hopkinton Economic Development			5	FT	Dept of Land Use, Planning & Permitting	John Gelcich, AICP	Town Planner	Planning Board Growth Study Committee				-		
4,401	187	16.95	14 Sherborn Planning & Development			2	FT	Planning Department	Heidi Doyle	Town Planner	Planning Board		Sherborn Business Association	Sherborn Square	-		
30,733	1,077	10.41	15 Wellesley Economic Development			5	FT	Select Board Office	Corey Testa	Assistant Exec. Director of Government Services	Select Board	5	Linden Sq. Retailers Assoc. Wellesley Sq. Merchants Assoc. Charles River Regional Chamber of Commerce		-		
13,752	551	15.52	16 Wayland Economic Development Committee			1	FT	Planning Department	Robert Hummel	Town Planner	Econ Development Committee	7			-		
6,889	116	12.89 19.7	17 Lincoln Economic Development Advisory Committee (?)			2	FT	Planning Department	Paula Vaughn-MacKenzie	Director of Planning & Land Use	N/A	N/A			-		
Tax rate source - https://joeshimkus.com/MA-Tax-Rates.aspx																	
Business figures: 2024 MERC Annual Report 495-MW Partnerships Community Profiles																	