



Town of Fairhaven

Department of Planning and Economic Development

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FAIRHAVEN,
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Economic Development Study Committee

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Present: Kevin McLaughlin, Bernard Roderick, Jessica Fidalgo and Todd MacGregor

Absent: Cathy Melanson, Eddie Lopez and Robert Espindola

Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr. Paul Foley was also present.

Mr. McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 6:36p.m. He welcomed Jessica Fidalgo, the new Planning Board representative.

Minutes: November 19, 2020 - Bernard Roderick made a motion to approve the minutes - Mr. McLaughlin stated he wanted to send a review of his draft from the Marine Resource Regulations to committee members per the minutes but couldn't find them on his computer. He will follow up within the next few days to send it over. Todd MacGregor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Goals of Economic Development:

Mr. Foley presented the five goals that the Economic Development Committee had put together back in 2017. This is a continuing reminder of the goals of the Committee. The goals are:

1. Viability of the working waterfront.
2. Commercial occupancies.
3. Encourage mixed use projects.
4. Incubation and growth of small Businesses.
5. Collaborate with New Bedford and other nearby towns on issues of workforce training/regional economic development

Mr. Foley said they will be collaborating with New Bedford as they received a letter from the State that the Harbor Plan either has to be reviewed and revised or we have to ask for another extension. He and Tim Cox are scheduled to meet with the New Bedford representatives regarding the Harbor Plan and dredging. Discussion ensued on how often the Harbor Plan is reviewed. Mr. Foley explained in the past five years it has been extended. Mr. Foley will review and give a synopsis to the Committee at a future meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin noted the Rt.6/240 Study that is happening now speaks to three out of the committee's 5 goals.

Marine Resource Regulations:

Mr. McLaughlin reiterated that he will try to forward his remarks over to the Committee in the next few days.

Rt.6/240 study:

Mr. McLaughlin stated he and Mr. Foley have been discussing this opportunity and Mr. McLaughlin thinks it would be a great idea to have someone (an architect perhaps) do a few renderings/drawings about the opportunities that exist within these plazas that show the opportunities of building up. Mr. McLaughlin thought it was a great idea to sell the vision to the townspeople as well as future developers.

Mr. Foley added the Rt6/240 Study to the website and said it was a work in progress. He said he was going to look into a few colleges that do studies on municipal issues and perhaps we can hire a studio to develop different visual scenarios. In the meantime he has created a place on the webpage for the study with images where he has begun to add pictures and maps as well as some design standards.

Mr. Foley also discussed the option of a 40 R, which is an overlay zoning where you keep existing zoning but have an overlay that allows more intense develop in line with the 40R goals. He explained the concept of housing units over commercial. The ground floor would be retail but above would be housing and office space. There is no intention to remove any commercial in the Target Area for detached single family homes. Mr. Foley said he is investigating 40R and looking into what that might look like for Fairhaven.

Mr. Foley put up the Route 6/240 target area map and reviewed with the members. Mr. Foley reviewed the proposed Fairhaven loop shuttle to New Bedford for the train terminal. He also reviewed the target area on the flood map as well as the economic development section on the webpage and how to access current information. Mr. Foley showed the state 40R design guidelines book on creating design standards for 40R Districts as an example but also said they could do their own picture book for Fairhaven to use as examples. Anyone who has suggestions can email Mr. Foley to add to this redevelopment study.

Mr. Roderick asked if there was an anticipated time-frame of these changes occurring. Mr. Foley said his optimistic goal would be to have zoning changes for town meeting in spring 2022. Mr. Foley stated that a few of the plaza owners and developers he has already been in contact with are receptive to see some changes but he will do more outreach to more owners and property developers.

Mr. McLaughlin mentioned "Wareham Crossing" and described it as a big box retail off to one side and then it mirrors a town street on the other side with parking areas nicely landscaped and small stores on either side. Ms. Fidalgo stated as well that in New Bedford downtown it is happening more with store fronts on the bottom with apartments above.

Mr. Roderick questioned whether Fairhaven being between Dartmouth and Wareham, where most people travel out of Fairhaven to do their shopping, might not be competitive with these bigger shopping areas. Mr. Foley said it was a good point but instead of having the big box stores this concept would allow more but smaller specialized stores with housing above which would also have a built in clientele. He gave the example of where Walmart is you could easily put another building in that parking lot with housing above and small businesses and tie it into a shuttle to the train. Going up in this area also could create water views for apartments above. Ms. Fidalgo stated she believed that housing will definitely be more attractive for Fairhaven with the train coming to New Bedford.

Mr. MacGregor stated that incubator discussions that have taken place in the last year or so on this committee and is very well needed in our area.

Mr. McLaughlin asked committee members to go to the website to review the content and Mr. Foley asked for any suggestions to be emailed to him as he wants to it to be interactive.

Other Business: CAMMPA

Mr. MacGregor spoke to the committee about CAMMPA (Coalition to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act). He said he was a part of the Dartmouth Southwater Wranglers and described the problems that have risen with the increase in the number of seals and how it's severely impacted the fisheries in Buzzards Bay. He said what started as a letter he wrote to Congressmen Keating (with no response) has been circulated around the fishing community and been the center of this act. Their goal is to deal with the problems of the seals. He said there are more than 600 grey seals on Gull Island in Buzzards Bay and 1.3 million in the North West Atlantic. He said they are destroying the fisheries. Mr. MacGregor also stated that for the local impact, in 2005 there were 25 small charter boats and now he is the only charter boat out of Fairhaven. He said the boats just aren't coming to Fairhaven.

Mr. MacGregor explained the CAMMPA goals: Public Health and Safety. He said this summer there were about 550 great white sharks in Massachusetts including in Buzzards Bay and they are coming up because there is a lot of food, they eat the grey seals. He said there is definitely an economic impact and the third goal is that the ecosystem is out of balance and they are trying to balance it. He said he wanted to point out this organization to the EDC so that they are aware and can support the CAMMPA organization.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested that Mr. MacGregor get on the Select Board's agenda to discuss CAMMPA and the mission. He said from a town-wide view, the Select Board should be able to support it, as the Economic Development Committee is just an advisory board to the Select Board

Next Meeting: January 21, 2020.

Bernie Roderick made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Todd MacGregor. Motion passed unanimously at 7:34pm.

Respectively,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary