



## Town of Fairhaven

### Department of Planning and Economic Development

Town Hall • 40 Center Street • Fairhaven, MA 02719

Telephone (508) 979-4082 • FAX (508) 979-4087

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### Fairhaven Economic Development Committee

Thursday, September 17, 2020 – Via Remote Zoom Platform

#### Meeting Minutes

FAIRHAVEN,  
MASS.

**Quorum/Attendance:** Mr. McLaughlin opened the meeting at 6:33p.m

**Present:** Kevin McLaughlin, Eddie Lopez, Cathy Melanson, Robert Espindola and Todd MacGregor

**Absent:** Bernie Roderick and Geoff Haworth

**Minutes** – August 27, 2020 – Cathy Melanson made a motion to accept the August 27, 2020 minutes and was seconded by Todd MacGregor. The motion passed unanimously.

**Updated Select Board Guidance of EDC** – Mr. Espindola stated that Mr. Rees wouldn't be identified as a member. Mr. McLaughlin stated the concerns he had were perhaps typo's that were in the mission statement, as it said 'customers' and a few other words he wasn't sure what it was referring to. Mr. Espindola stated he apologized for not following up, so he will do that for the next meeting.

**Goals of EDC** – Mr. Foley reviewed the Economic Development Plan from 2017. Mr. McLaughlin stated it didn't need to be reviewed every meeting, but to keep it on the agenda so it's fresh in everyone's minds of what the goals are and how they are proceeding with them.

Mr. Foley stated he sat down with Plaza owners last week and discussed the possibility of developing the area with a higher density mixed-use and building up rather than out. They seemed very excited about being able to do that. Mr. Foley stated he is working on looking at different grants that are available.

**Redevelopment Study** – Mr. McLaughlin asked how everything ties into the study. Mr. Foley reviewed the purpose of the redevelopment study area as being divided between industrial and commercial. North of Bridge Street is the more industrial area and most of the district and South of Bridge Street is the area more appropriate to mixed-use and commercial.

Mr. Foley reviewed the study that will review existing land uses, zoning and barriers to development within these areas and assess the feasibility of various development scenarios. He said the intent is to develop a comprehensive framework that facilitates new development in previously developed areas while preserving the historic and rural character of the rest of the town in order to guide sustainable development and build new capacity for growth in appropriate areas.

The New York business owners, that Mr. Foley met with last week, were the ones that own Staples plaza and everyone agreed they need to figure out how to use the space better, especially the huge parking lot. Mr. Foley also spoke to SRPEDD today to apply for different grants with their assistance. Mr. Foley reviewed the 'target area' map in the Route 6/240 area which is outside of the flood zone.

Mr. Foley went over the Rte. 6/240 Redevelopment Study. So far the received \$30,000 from the DHCD Community Compact Best Practices grant for the redevelopment study under the Housing & Economic Development "Preparing for Success" best practice. He also stated SPREDD received a \$400,000 EDA Cares Grant to help other Towns to apply for other grants such as through Mass Development, etc. Mr. Foley went over different grants that are available and what he will be looking at. He is hoping town meeting will give \$5,000-\$8,000 to the EDC and they could apply some of that funding towards the Redevelopment Study and added to the remaining funds in the Best Practices Grant would bring the match for an EDA Technical Assistance Grant up to at least \$30,000.

Mr. McLaughlin questioned the \$30,000 grant and asked if that grant money was going to just be used as leverage to get more grant money. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know who was actually going to be contracted to do these grant studies.

Mr. Foley explained that the Best Practices grant would be used as leverage in a way in that it will be part of the local match to hopefully get a Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant but would also eventually be spent on the study. Mr. Foley said that he will be going after different grants for different chapters of the study and that different consultants would write different chapters of the study.

He went on to explain the Complete Streets Grant that he and Mr. Vinnie Furtado of the DPW received. They chose an engineer to be the consultant to assist the Town developing a Tier 1 Policy and a Tier 2 Prioritization Plan. Once MassDOT approves the Towns Prioritization Plan, we become eligible to apply for up to \$400,000 in transportation infrastructure funds every year. The Prioritization Plan will include at least fifteen different projects across the whole Town. Some of those projects will inevitably be within the Redevelopment Study Target Area as it is so central.

Mr. Foley clarified that they actually received two different grants. One for \$38,500 to implement the Complete Streets program; and \$30,000 for the Rt.6/240 redevelopment study.

In the future, Mr. Foley wants to get back to the database of vacant lots. He reviewed other EDA Priority Areas – New Bedford Free Trade Zone (FTZ). Discussion ensued.

#### **Review of Town Meeting Articles:**

Mr. McLaughlin asked to review any interesting TM articles that the EDC should be aware of. Mr. Foley, reviewed the Planning Board's interest at developing a bylaw to review short term rentals. They are tabling it for the Spring Annual Town Meeting because they do not want to rush into it without getting everyone's input. They are going to schedule some public hearings over the winter months. He explained about the new state law for rentals and the occupancy tax. He stated he was aware of 56 people that have registered their home/rentals in Fairhaven through the state's database.

Mr. Lopez said he felt there was far more than the 56 units per the state list. He said there are a lot of different avenues and social media that people are putting rentals out there.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to review town meeting articles to offer the committee's opinions/suggestions. Mr. Foley apologized for not having forwarded the draft list to the EDC for them to review. He offered to pull the list up on the screen but it was felt it would be better to send the document out first and see if there is anything on the list that requires another EDC meeting before Town Meeting. He stated that

Town Meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2020. Mr. Foley will forward a copy of the meeting articles to Mr. McLaughlin who will forward to the EDC members.

**Marine Resource Committee:** Mr. Espindola stated that the Marine Resource Committee has met weekly or so, to get extra meetings to help write up the rules and regulations for their next meeting. The draft should be ready for input from the public soon. Their next meeting is next Thursday, October 24 and the information could be forwarded to the EDC Committee for their comment before the MRC meets with the Select Board on October 4, 2020. Mr. Espindola will forward a copy of the draft to Mr. McLaughlin next week.

Once the draft is received by the committee members, they can discuss if they want a special meeting before Town Meeting to discuss this further.

**Any other business:**

Mr. McLaughlin spoke a bit about attendance as he has had no input back from Geoff Haworth and has not heard from him at all. Mr. McLaughlin asked Mr. Foley to discuss with Planning Board and Mr. Haworth's involvement or to designate someone else to be on the EDC. Mr. Foley will discuss with Planning Board members at their next meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin asked for the Town Warrant articles to be forwarded to the group and then they will review to discuss if need be at a meeting before Town Meeting, which is October 20, 2020.

Cathy Melanson made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Todd MacGregor. The motion passed unanimously at 7:52p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella  
Recording Secretary