

Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Thursday May 23, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

East Room, Fairhaven Town Hall

Fairhaven, Ma 02719

I. ADMINTRATIVE BUSINESS:

- a. Attendance: Chairman, Kevin McLaughlin, Bob Espindola, Eddie Lopez, Todd MacGregor, Bernard Roderick and John Seed. Absent: Geoff Haworth
Town Planner, Paul Foley was also present.
- b. Approval of minutes from April 18, 2019 meeting.

Mr. MacGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of April 18, 2019, seconded by John Seed, this motion passed with four members in favor and one abstention (4-0-1).

a. Vacant property data base

Mr. McLaughlin explained that this task had been given to SRPEDD. Mr. Foley provided the board with a brief update, he received a copy of this data base which he will put on the board and go over at the next meeting.

The town is going to get GIS in which will be very helpful in both gathering information and displaying it pertaining to each individual project. He further explained the vacant data base and its concept and benefits. There was also a discussion regarding the importance of updating property information every year, which is a benefit of the GIS system. Mr. Roderick noted that it is important to compare the information with that which is retrievable from the accessor's office and online. The board members discussed how frequent this type of information should be updated.

Bob Espindola explained that he had asked the Building Commissioner to provide a listing of permits that have been issued on a periodic basis just to have a better idea about work around the town, particularly commercial properties to see if there's anything significant. Mr. Foley discussed a few potential commercial construction projects that have expressed an interest in possibly doing a project in Fairhaven

b. Massachusetts Economic Council Membership

Mr. Foley provided the Committee with an update regarding the Massachusetts Economic Council Membership. They will send a new invoice for Fairhaven to rejoin and he will keep the Board informed with any new information.

c. Social Media Platform

Bob Espindola explain that the Town now has an IT Department and a Social Media person that split their time with the school department and if the Town or Board needs something specific they are available. He thought maybe we should spotlight local businesses on public TV.

d. EDC website

Mr. McLaughlin explained that at this time it is not possible to put an independent EDC website together before June 2019 but we can revisit this at a later time. Mr. Foley explained that he will be getting some access to the website and has experience regarding putting items online. He explained that he can put up documents and do what he can to improve the existing website.

Mr. Espindola explained the significance of the EDC and that we should utilize the committee for outreach purposes. Discussion regarding whether the outreach would impact the next fiscal years' budget for EDC. He said the EDC has \$8,000 set aside for FY'19.

e. Ocean Cluster

Mr. McLaughlin explained that Mr. Rees was previously going to speak but Mr. Rees was not present at this time. Mr. Foley noted that Mr. Rees had given him contact information for Edward Washburn who is in charge of the New Bedford Ocean Cluster. He explained that he will reach out to Mr. Washburn and that he had done some research on the Ocean Cluster and will readdress the board on the matter. Mr. McLaughlin discussed doing more research and partnering with other towns. Mr. Foley briefly explained his understanding is that the Ocean Cluster concept is to get companies to have a closed-loop approach to products in which what was formerly discarded could be the raw resources for another product. For example, they use every part of a fish for several different products, not just the meat for eating. The Board discussed that this would be a good partnership.

f. Parking By-law comparisons to other towns.

Mr. McLaughlin spoke about parking around the town and that some have excess parking that is designed for one day a year and questioned what the parking number should be. Mr. Foley said he could do a parking analysis after he looks over the parking By-laws a little further, he is unsure about the surrounding towns but will look more into it. He explained that at the last meeting Mr. Haworth explained that the by-laws have changed and referenced a current construction of a Dunkin' in a parking area at the K-Mart plaza.

Mr. Lopez asked Mr. Foley to look into more detail regarding comparing Fairhaven to Wareham and Dartmouth due to their closer comparison to Fairhaven when it comes to residential and commercial parking and suggested posting the Opportunity Zone map to the website.

g. Economic Development Study

Mr. Foley discussed a grant that might be able be available through EDA to do a redevelopment study in the Opportunity Zone with up to \$30,000 of EDA Funds but we need to find a match. Mr. Foley described where the Opportunity Zone is as well as how the opportunity funds work. He explained that the EDC is eligible for a community compact grant which they received in the past however, for this year the DLS have allocated all the funds, but he will send them a letter and see what can be done. He added that it will be important to work with the property and business owners of commercial shopping malls and make them a part of the study process. There followed a discussion regarding the opportunity fund and Opportunity Zone and how it

works and where money can be invested ensued. Mr. Foley he received a call from someone asking if the Hampton Inn could take advantage of the program. Unfortunately it appears that they are just outside of the zone. He gave them a number to call to see if they could be included.

h. Broadband Study Committee

Bob Espindola explained that the committee has met a few times and that the town is going to hire a consultant in order to manage the process. I used to be called Municipal Fiber. SRPEDD had the same company called Entry Point. He explained that there is a workshop on June 11, 2019 at the SRPEDD office in Taunton regarding interest at a regional level

i. Any other business

Mr. Espindola explained that he and Mr. Foley went to an economic development event at UMASS Dartmouth and he provided an update of the event. He also discussed the SRPEDD annual meeting that he and Mr. Foley and other Planning Board members attended. There was a good guest speaker who went into detail about homeland security measures that they were educated about at the meeting. He explained that the Fairhaven contingent sat with some staff from SRPEDD who discussed the outreach to Fairhaven about the Opportunity zone and that they are interested in working with Fairhaven.

Mr. Espindola also explained the regional Economic Development Council and its key education pieces for local towns. He also suggested the EDC should look at grant opportunities for Co-Creative Spaces and that the town should create a focus group on off-shore wind. Mr. Foley noted that he went to a meeting at SRPEDD that highlighted Blue Tech. They thought that our area was strong in the Blue Economy but that we had opportunities with regard to scientific and high tech research and development for the Blue Economy (Blue Tech).

There was a discussion about the Route 6 Bridge and how it impedes development in the north harbor.

There was a discussion regarding changes to the final zoning bylaw language for the historical re-use special permits. The Planning Board will be the Special Permit Granting Authority. Discussion ensued.

The Committee agreed the next meeting will be Thursday June 20, 2019.

Mr. McGregor made a motion to adjourn to 7:46 p.m. Seconded by John Seed, this motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Shallyn Rodriguez
Recording Secretary**