

TOWN OF ACTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 19 April Meeting summary by Derrick Chin

Room 9 Town Hall

Meeting opened by Vice Chair David Foley at 7:32PM

Members present: Ann Chang, Derrick Chin, Dave Didriksen, David Foley, Mike Majors, Selby

Guests: James Augr, Middlesex Community College student, doing research for a town government financial paper.

Joshua Tolley, Littleton High School student, providing moral support to Augr.

Terra Friedrichs, Acton activist, continuing her previous effort at 1 March 2018 EDC meeting to enlist EDC support for:

- The Town paying \$10K to \$12K for an up to date assessment of the Kmart lot.
- Mentioned assessment of \$2.6Million.
- Then Town can decide whether to buy the Kmart lot from Stop & Shop.
- Possible use as a community center, or affordable or senior housing.
- Or lease it back to Kmart to continue as a low-cost shop of products for seniors.
- Payback period of buying lot would be several years of annual rent payments to Town by Kmart.
- Denigrated Walker property committee ideas as a “morass”, which term brought strong objection from Selby.

Dave Didriksen: From his multiple decades of running retail businesses, usually public resident proposals are not compatible with private developers' proposals. Town officials and residents should first agree/compromise on what is doable (financially sustainable) for this lot before decision to rezone or buying lot.

Derrick Chin: Presented actual Town data of existing assessment valuation of this 3-parcel lot as \$5.9Million: and he estimated annual real estate taxes of \$106K; using FY17 tax rate of \$19:38/\$1000 valuation, plus 1.5% CPA surcharge. Disagreed with Terra's saying that it would only take several years to reach an agreement and start developing the lot. Derrick mentioned a proposal for a lot in Belmont, started in 2008 and very similar to Winstanley Associates (contracted Stop & Shop developer) latest concepts for the Kmart lot. On the Belmont development, after going back and forth at the drawing boards 3 times, approval for a special permit with conditions was granted to the lot owner in 2013. Then the developer was unable to get financing. The land was eventually sold to Toll Bros. in 2016. That is 8 years.

David Foley: Recommended Terra present written proposal to BOS after changed BOS membership assigns a new liaison to the EDC. Term of Chingsung Chang, present BOS liaison, expires June 2018. Terra tried to enlist David Foley help in writing the proposal. David and Selby agreed to meet with Terra to provide input or guidance for her approach.

Rather than spending any money for an updated assessment of the lot, at least 3 members suggested a no-cost phone call to Stop and Shop to get an idea of what the lot is worth to Stop & Shop. Selby assigned to call.

Minutes of EDC meeting from 1 March 2018... not available tonight for approval.

Review of Annual Town Meeting

Selby: Andy Brockway probably will neither continue as **KC Steering Committee chair** nor participate in further efforts to pass **KC Improvement Initiative**.

Nagog Pond. Several members opined that there was not an imminent water crisis even though most of our wells were only 28 to 40 ft deep, that more water could be obtained from drilling existing wells deeper. Acton Water District has reiterated that should Assabet 1 and 2 be shut down because of increased levels of 1.4 dioxane plume from Nuclear Metals Inc, the other wells can take up the slack. Derrick C disagreed with the other members opinions. The 1 to 3 ratio rejection of Article 26 at Town Meeting reflected residents concern about the security of our water supply. Derrick said he asked at the AWD Commissioners 19 April 2018 meeting why not run a stress test by shutting down Assabet 1 and 2 wells (presently accounting for 40% of AWD water) for a while and measure whether the remaining wells can easily

make up for the loss, plus rotate individual remaining wells at even greater than the raised average of the other remaining wells. Derrick said he was told that Littleton had considered taking water from Cobb's Pond (not a great pond) within Littleton but Concord said that Concord would file a complaint about such an effort because Nagog Pond water would be impacted since Cobb's Pond is within the Nashoba River watershed.

Update From Selby and Other Members

Selby: Building/sewering new elementary twin schools: Rather than overburdening the building/engineering Town staff, Selby suggested Town hire third party to do the inspection/approval work.

Dave Didriksen: Suggested EDC put out a list of businesses adjacent to the Acton portion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Selby suggested a map of adjacent businesses to relieve parking pressure at Nara Park. Selby is thinking EDC should sponsor a meeting with adjacent businesses. David Foley had concerns that a map implies businesses direct access to the Trail which may not currently or in the future exist.

David Foley: David will be EDC delegate to the Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop in May

Selby: Land Use won a grant for a Housing and Economic Development Plan for the whole Town of Acton.

Selby won a grant for study of development of Walker property.

Selby will not be at next meeting.

9:30PM. Meeting adjourned.