



Economic Development Committee Minutes

May 2, 2025

Town Hall

10:30 AM to 12 PM

These are the minutes of the EDC meeting of May 2, 2025 held in person.

Called to Order: 10:35 AM

Present: Patty Sutherland, Shirley Ming, Michael Carpenter, Sharon Tchon Gruet, Fran Arsenault (SB Liaison), Maura Haberman (EDC Liaison), Patricia Costa, (Econ. Development Director).

Absent: David Cote, Greg Jarboe, James Fuccione (Planning Board Liaison)

Citizens present: Amol Patil, Mike Rogers

PRELIMINARIES

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

- Review of meeting minutes from previous meeting (April 4, 2025): Passed unanimously
- Public participation: None

II. NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

- **Updates from Economic Development Director:** Brunch with SBA staff and business owners at Town Hall on June 11 with a proposed time from 8 to 11 a.m. and two keynote speaker(s) starting at 9am. They are: Lisa Welsh from the SBA and the Supply Diversity Office – minority business certifications. The main purpose is for business owners to network and learn about SBA opportunities. Financial institutions are welcome to join as well. The SBA is preparing a flyer. In addition to this event the SBA Matchmaker event is down the road.
- **Vacant Storefront Program with MassDevelopment:** <https://www.massdevelopment.com/assets/document/grant-programs/UPP-Guidelines.pdf>) The Massachusetts Underutilized Properties Program (UPP) offers grants annually to improve, rehabilitate, or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties. There are grants from 250k to a million that the town can help apply. Projects can be combined. The application deadline is June 4, 2025. Some of the potential properties being discussed are the vacant McDonald's building in Kelley's corner, former Acton Toyota site, 3 School Street and 13 School Street (related to town meeting article 12, <https://ma-acton2.civicplus.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/21582>); Patricia Costa will provide a list of properties for discussion after town meeting. She would like to get suggestions to her by the third week of May. Of note, the Town can apply for Great Road tax credits through this program. June 4 is the deadline to apply.
- **MAPC Cultural Arts Strategic Plan**
Patricia reported that the installation of two murals will be installed. The first will be at Acton Pharmacy with an unveiling date of May 23, and the other mural will be located at Gould's Plaza later this summer. Patricia would like to visit sites and have a draft plan by October.
- **RKG Associates Status/Strategic Plan for Economic Development.** Information from Kristen Guichard, planning director is that final draft plan for release for public comment by May 16th. Public comment period is from May 16th- May 27th. The EDC is will plan a special meeting for Tuesday, June at 3, at 7 p.m. for the public presentation.

- **Town Meeting Warrant that EDC has an interested in.** <https://ma-acton2.civicplus.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/21582>

Leaf Blower: Article 32: Adopt New General Bylaw - Leaf Blower Control (majority vote). There was a similar article at a previous town meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made to support Economic Development Committees position on Leaf Blowers (opposition to the article) - Article 32 was made by Mike and seconded by Sharon, 5-0, Passes unanimous. Sharon will present at the Town meeting on behalf of EDC.

Article 13 was discussed: Authorize Real Property Disposition – 13 School Street (two-thirds majority vote). The EDC Voted unanimously to support this article with motion being made by Mike and seconded by Sharon, 5-0.

MOTION: The EDC voted unanimously in favor of Article 13 noting this can be the first step in develop a more cohesive plan around south Acton and the train station.

Article 34: Affirm Home Rule Petition for Checkout Bag Minimum Charge (majority vote). The Committee discussed this, and decided not to take a position. Also briefly discussed was **Article 5 – Traffic Signals in S. Acton** and did not take a position.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Outreach/Communication Plan** (Mike/Dave): No update.
- **Housing Production Plan** (Patty/Shirley): Draft plan is available. See link: [Draft 2025 Housing Production Plan](#), Public comments are accepted through May 8th. [Public Comment Portal](#)
- **EDC's goals for FY25:** Not discussed.
- **Member Updates/Inquiries:** Art to refurbish eyesore spots in Acton. Ideas of painting the utility box similar to what Bedford does is discussed. Needs follow up utility company. Sharon noted that sewer grants are available but the application must be submitted by 6/4. This is possibly part of the MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties Program (UPP). Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Legislation (Sharon), Businesses At-Risk (Sharon). See notes in the previous section.

IV. MORE REGULAR BUSINESS

- **ED Events & Ribbon Cuttings.** The Ribbon Cuttings have been very well received and will be working on setting up a plan. Silver Unicorn 3rd Annual Kids Graphic Novel Festival – May 3. This event consists of book signings with authors across of country. The Town supported by helping to coordinate shuttle buses and public safety. It's National Small Business Week May 4-11. Patricia suggested to potentially host SBA match making event in the future. The Town partners with SBA an has organized regional banks for business owners. This event will be different from the event on June 11. Maura reported this is on walking tour this weekend and that th3 250th is going to have a quarterly event during this 250th time (<https://actonma.gov/250>). Restaurant Week – October 20 through 27 save the date. Shop Small – Thanksgiving, November 27, 2025 through January 15, 2026, save the date. Business owners prefer prolong the shopping season with earlier start. DEI and other Community events: no events.
- **Updates from Town of Acton Boards and Committees:** Ground breaking McManus Manor – May 5 at 10:am
- **Next meeting (ZOOM) – Friday, May 30, 2025, Proposed 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

V. CONSENT ITEMS

Votes are noted in the section above.

Next Steps and Action Items:

- Sharon to present EDC position on leaf blower at the Town meeting.
- Patrica Costa to provide list of property candidates for UPP application after Town meeting

for discussion after town meeting.

- Patrica Costa to look more into the UPP program including whether both public and private properties are included and whether sewer is part of program as well.
- Patty Sutherland to develop EDC position material for **Article 13**.

Additional material:

<https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-18899>

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

For more information about the Economic Development Committee, please send email to EDC@actonma.gov

DRAFT