



Economic Development Committee Minutes

Dec 5, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Called to Order: 10:35 AM

Present: Patty Sutherland, Michael Carpenter, Shirley Ming, David Cote, Sharon Tchon Gruet, Gary Phillips, Patricia Costa (ED Director), Fran Arsenault (SB Liaison), James Fuccione (Planning Board Liaison)

Absent: Robert Jackson, Maura Haberman (ED Liaison), Jason Cole (Fin Comm Liaison)

Also present: Larry Powers (Powers Gallery)

PRELIMINARIES

Call the Roll – attendance is noted above.

I - REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Review of meeting minutes November 7th, 2025 – Supporting Material 01

- Minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved.

2. Public Concerns

3. Public Participation

Larry Powers noted that the Powers Gallery is a historic property that has undergone substantial renovation and suggested that the Town of Acton consider purchasing it. Patty recommended arranging a property tour.

Committee members expressed support for the site and recognized its prominent location within Acton's Great Road business district. However, Fran cautioned that the Town's upcoming budget will likely be constrained. Patty asked Larry if a "lease to own" contract might be possible.

It was also noted that the property's proximity to the rail trail may create opportunities for grant funding.

II - NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

1. Updates from the Office of Economic Development (Patricia)

2. Powers Gallery (Sharon/ Patricia)

3. Grant Awards and Applications 2026 (Patty/Patricia) – Supporting Material 02

a. Employer Child Care Innovation Fund (ECCIF)(Mike/Patricia)

The application was submitted through Exchange Hall, as funding must be provided via a nonprofit organization. The application has been acknowledged and the grant is highly competitive. Additional meeting will be held on Monday, 12/8/25.

b. TAP Technical Assistance Program (James/Patricia)

Patricia has been working with James on priority areas for technical assistance under TAP application and expects support letters by the December 8th deadline.

c. **New Grants: Shared Streets and Spaces Program**

This MassDOT program funds municipalities and public transit authorities to quickly implement improvements to plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and strengthened commerce. These improvements can be integrated into commercial district or town center land use plans to enhance performance, appeal, and dwell time in commercial storefront districts.

4. Updates from EDC members (EDC Members)

Sharon raised that the school reorganization discussion could have complications with parents and the committee should discuss any relevant economic development topic before town meeting.

IV - Ongoing Matters

1. Outreach / Communication Plan (Mike/ Patricia)

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School has listed this as a volunteer opportunity. A minimum of four student volunteers will be required for the effort to be effective with one student currently signed up. The project is expected to begin in earnest at the start of next year. Gary stated that he has a couple students he can speak with about this opportunity.

2. South Acton Working Group (James / Patricia)

Patricia and James have been convening a working group of key stakeholders in Acton. The group is expected to narrow down the goals set forth for the district under SEDAP and the South Acton Vision and to coordinate actionable measures.

3. MAPC Technical Assistant Program (James / Patricia) – Supporting Material 03

The topic was covered under the earlier item II-3.b TAP Technical Assistance Program noted above.

4. Leaf Blowers Survey (Sharon)

Sharon shared that the Finance Committee will prepare and conduct the survey to determine the financial impact of implementing the new bylaw. The ideal survey should have less than 10 questions and can be completed within 5 minutes as per town consultant.

5. SEDAP Matrix Updates (Patricia) – Supporting Material 04

Patricia will continue to identify ED and EDC activities that support each of the stated Strategic goals. Patricia highlighted new wayfinding signage for Route 27, the reach of communication with the business community through the Newsletter, and the importance of making the Newsletter accessible to the non-business community as well. Gary mentioned the opportunity to reach the senior center audience through the ED Newsletter. Patty shared her support and mentioned that the information could form the basis of the EDC Annual Report prepared for Town Meeting.

6. Collaborations with other municipalities (Patricia)

A Route 2 Corridor Economic Development Group is being formed in collaboration with Lexington, Lincoln, Concord, Maynard, Acton, Littleton, Harvard, Ayer, and Shirley, with Patricia representing Acton.

V- Consent Items

None.

V- ACTION STEPS

Patty will assist in the coordination of a property tour of Powers Gallery.

Sharon will continue to provide updates on elementary school reorganization.
Patricia will be the central point of contact for ABRHS volunteers and EDC survey.
Patricia will finalize TAP application and submit it by the December 8th deadline.
Patricia will share the survey description with EDC members to help gather volunteers.

Supporting Materials

<https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-19794>

- 01 Meeting Minutes November 7, 2025
- 02 MAPC Grants 2026
- 03 South Acton Vision
- 04 SEDAP Matrix Updated October 2025

Next meeting is January 9, 2025 at 10:30

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 PM.

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