

# EDC Minutes – 7 November 2013

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These are the meeting minutes from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 7 November 2013 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Nancy Dinkel.

Present: Allan Gulliver, Dave Clough, Chris Pappas, Derrick Chin, Dick Calandrella, Doug Tindal, Larry Kenah, Nancy Dinkel

Not Present: Ann Chang

There was no public participation.

Minutes from the 17 October 2013 meeting, with three editorial changes, were approved.

## Agenda Items

### 457 Great Road

Dave Clough brought this issue to the committee's attention. The building in question is nearly 150 years old. A law firm just moved out. A spa currently located in West Concord was planning to move in. The comment that Dave heard was along the lines of how difficult it is to start a business in Acton.

Apparently, all local contractors were fully booked so the spa owner engaged contractors who are not familiar with working with the various town departments. At the same time, there were difficulties working with the building department. Whatever the merits, issues escalated to the point that Mark Hald (in role as assistant town manager) got involved. At the same time, Acton was getting "bad press" with the local Chamber of Commerce.

In the discussion that followed, the committee observed that there was no history of such problems in the building department. We concluded that the prospective business needed to engage a general contractor (an expert, not an amateur) as the sole person to engage with the various town departments. In this particular case, because of the history, the town also needed to appoint a single point of contact. (This is the role being played by Mark Hald.)

There is no role for EDC in the current circumstance but the committee needs to stress the role of customer service as part of the "left hand side" part of town hall changes.

### Town Planning

There was a general discussion about town planning prompted by a note from the Planning Director to the EDC. The exchange was prompted by a request for an additional member of the planning department. A subsequent discussion focused on whether the planning department had enough resources to fulfill its planning role.

Based on Roland Bartl's response to Nancy Dinkel's request for more detail, The Economic Development Committee does not support the request for an additional employee in the Planning Department.

### **Remaining Agenda Items**

Dave Clough and Larry Kenah provided a very brief update on the Kelley's Corner Initiative Selection Committee. The committee is interviewing prospective candidates and will deliver its recommendation to the town manager before the end of the month.

Derrick Chin reported on Allen Medical moving from its current location in Post Office Square to Discovery Way. A sign built for the new location exceeded size requirements. The committee asked once again why such issues are discovered so late in the game.

There were no updates on agenda items #5, #6, #8, and #9.

### **In Closing**

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah, EDC Clerk.