

Minutes of the Economic Development Committee

Thursday, October 5, 2017

Room 9, Acton Town Hall

Present: Selby, Mike Majors, Derrick Chin, Josh Fischel, Larry Kenah, Peter Daniel, Chingsung Chang, Dave Didriksen

Absent: David Foley, Ann Chang

Meeting is called to order at 7:33 pm.

There is no public present to participate.

I. Minutes: With a few changes, the minutes are unanimously approved by those who were in attendance at the 9/7 meeting.

II. Next Meeting: Should we have our next scheduled meeting? No, it is decided. The next meeting is the 2nd of November.

III. Insulet Update: There was a groundbreaking ceremony, with several of us (oh, and the governor) there. A few VIPs spoke; they mentioned again that they would bring 1000 jobs. The site, Mike Majors noted, is indeed beautiful—something that *should* be a world headquarters for a company, and it's remarkable that it was vacant for so long. Selby says that another building in Nagog Park is now housing a couple cosmetics technology companies that have clustered there; this was all to say that there's potential for a resurgence in that area.

IV. Tonight's Fun Fact: Derrick does not like the texture of scones.

V. Special Town Meeting: There are five zoning issues up for vote at the upcoming town meeting.

Based on some fears of McMansionization from one of last year's initiatives, one says that, if you're on a non-conforming lot, and if you propose the change of the footprint that's in compliance with the setbacks, as long as you're within the appropriate square footage, you will not need a special permit. Larry Kenah asks if the EDC needs to take a position on this. After many tangents, we decided to take no position on it.

We *do* want to take a position on re-zoning Brookside shops—in favor of it. We feel okay about the possibility of it passing this time.

With regard to parking changes in South Acton Village: there's a property at 21 Maple Street, abutting the train station on the inbound side. The owner has shut down his business, and without going to the conservation commission or other committees, he's been renting out parking spaces on his property to commuters. In addition to that zoning violation, he also has a wetlands violation that a resident has complained about. Apparently, once a proposed zoning change has been advertised, it's legal until it's voted on. If we allow private property owners to rent their spots out, it would lead to South Acton becoming essentially a land of surface

parking. We have an offer on the table to him, though FinComm is also not crazy about buying up more land at this point. There is no consensus on this item tonight from the EDC.

VI. EDC Future Projects: We might want to consider a town tax incentive policy; Shelburne has recently developed one of their own. We'll read that for next meeting so we can discuss our options at the next meeting. Selby has learned some lessons from trying to implement TIFs now; he lists some, too quickly for your humble clerk's brain and fingers to merge into a synergistic collaboration; kindly forgive him. Was there a better way to bring Insulet-relevant articles to Town Meeting? It doesn't seem so in that case, but Chingsung Chang suggests we could work with companies with less aggressive timetables to split their articles across multiple Town Meetings. We are also basically no longer considering STAs.

For other future projects, Larry wants someone to volunteer to lead what they propose.

VIII. Updates from Members: It's the return of Larry & Marcy's Survey of Businesses. This is just to say that it's begun again.

Mike Majors said the local meals tax revenue has come in at \$309,000, well over what was forecast.

“Y'all want to talk about smoking?” asks Chingsung Chang. (He means marijuana dispensaries.) There's a medicinal marijuana facility going in on Great Road. Selby points out that, if we bring in recreational marijuana facilities, we'll have more people who'll want to eat, which will increase our local meals tax revenue.

IX. Additional Update from Selby: He brought up Terra's idea of business incubator spaces, which is happening in Selby's old town of Ashland; Selby has a similar idea for the Civil Defense building across from Exchange Hall in South Acton, since it no longer needs to be used for storage.

Adjourned at 8:31 pm. Go, Pats.