

**Town of Sharon
Economic Development Committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**EDC Meeting Minutes
1/31/22**

EDC Members

Rob Maidman, Chair	Alan Lury
Jim Berish absent	Pasqualino Pannone absent
Eli Hauser	Xander Shapiro
Milena Virrankoski	Aleksander Tomic joined at 7:30 PM

Other Attendees

Elizabeth Ellis	Maria De La Fuente
Philip King	

Administration

- Chair Maidman called the EDC meeting to order at 7:05 PM via ZOOM. He stated objectives for tonight's meeting is to bring everyone up to date on Master Plan and Zoning Recodification and go through summary report presentation and then after everything is put together Xander and Rob will write the Executive Summary. Need to determine what we want the role to be in the future.

Minutes

- Mr. Shapiro moved to accept the minutes of 12/20/21 and Mr. Lury seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0-0 unanimously in favor of approval.

Master Plan Update

- Ms. Ellis said the shift is to agro-tourism. There are several grants coming due for which she is applying. These include a feasibility study, bike infrastructure to include bike lanes, docking station and to rent bikes. There is a crossover with other committees for these grants. She was in contact with Peg Arguimbau of the Conservation Commission and Recreation is a big group to talk to.
- Ms. De La Fuente said the docking bike share system offers recreational opportunities. She said we can apply marketing plans to attract people to Sharon: take day trips. Advertise open space. Sharon is a perfect location and is close to everything. Recognize Sharon's potential. It is family friendly. She will hear back on the grants by March.

Energy Advisory Committee

- Mr. Shapiro said things are progressing well. East is up and running. Heights is up and running. The land fill has been approved. The high school project is proceeding and Heights is progressing.

- Mr. Maidman said the Mass DEP approved the design for the land fill. The approved design will not intervene with any laws. This was a major hurdle. Need to determine if it has to be considered in a regional process. Figure out when this can take root. Residual use of electricity by the Town. Money to be made by renters.

Rezoning Recodification

- Mr. Maidman said Mr. Hauser said height is restrictive for Route 1. Mr. Hauser said the goal is 5 stories on Route 1. That's when people make money. This makes it attractive to the developer. What zoning might be applied in business districts?
- Ms. Ellis said other boards will weigh in on the drafts.
- Mr. Hauser said there is an appetite for a discussion at Town Meeting. Set up subgroups to reach out with communication to educate townspeople on the presentation and build momentum. There are revenue possibilities. What could it do to offset costs? Need people to come to Town Meeting and vote for this initiative.
- Ms. De La Fuente said there is now general cleanup of the zoning regulations. They are reorganizing and making it concise.
- Mr. Maidman said zoning is a complicated subject. The goal is to get it done and be on the Town Meeting Agenda in May. This is a very ambitious goal.
- Eli talked about Route 1. Xander and Milena are working on Heights and Alan and Sasha are working on Shaw's Plaza which is a work in progress.
- Philip King asked if we can do anything for Shaw's plaza. One developer is suing another across the street. Can we change zoning?
- Mr. Maidman asked Ms. Ellis to determine opportunities for the properties on Route 1. What do the landowners want? There are sewage and water constraints. Determine economics. There is something there but its limited. Include landowners and what they paid.
- Ms. Ellis said what comes to forefront is the other towns in the region. Competition in the area is the key constraint.
- Mr. Maidman said we have not spoken about split tax recently. What do we want the Select Board to know and think about regarding socio-economic development? What we have is quantitative and descriptive. 1. Incentivized zoning and 2. Competitiveness of Sharon – overarching ideas.
- Mr. Hauser said we need to be in the future. What do we envision for Route 1, P.O. Square, Heights, Shaw's? We need funding to do studies to put zoning in place. He said P.O. Square looks tired, as does Route 1. They are not pretty. Why can't we refurbish. If we make it beautiful people will go. This is positive reinforcement. He said we need to coordinate across boards to keep building momentum.
- Ms. De la Fuente said 3 grants open on 3/18 for a 6/3 submission. There is one for wayfinding, district increment improvement and technical assistance to expand business.

- Ms. Virrankoski said she agrees with Mr. Hauser that we need to look at the future and show things are doable.
- Chair Maidman said it's about vision, call to action and need to get things started.

Adjournment

- Mr. Shapiro moved to close the meeting and Mr. Lury seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 6-0-0 via roll call to conclude at 8:19 PM.
- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 2/28