

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes
10/13/20**

EDC Members

Rob Maidman, Acting Chair	Alan Lury
Jim Berish	Pasqualino Pannone
Eli Hauser	Xander Shapiro

Other Attendees

None	
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Administration

- The EDC meeting began at 7:00PM.

Minutes

- The Committee voted 5-0-0 in favor of approval of the minutes of 9/29/20.

Discussion

Town Planner

- Acting Chair Maidman opened the meeting by stating that yesterday, Town Meeting approved the budget and we can finally get a planner. The part time position will be shared with Norwood. This position will report through the DPW working on infrastructure, traffic flow, Planning Board and EDC. A job description will be written and the EDC can have input. Mr. Maidman said he will homogenize them into a description but is unsure how this position will be recruited.
- Mr. Shapiro asked if the positions for both towns.
- Acting Chair Maidman said yes and monies will be coming from the Kendall funds and then grant driven. We need to identify expertise to decide where the person's time needs to go.
- Mr. Pannone said DPW deals with roads and water. We need a long term thought as they are reactionary to immediate projects.
- Acting Chair Maidman said the objectives of the Planning Board is to retrieve some ZBA approval processes and put in the Planning Board.
- Mr. Pannone suggested the Planner could chase grants for the town.
- Acting Chair Maidman said the priority would be to determine what it will take to get grant money in Post Office Square.
- Mr. Pannone said he hopes this person is in charge of leading the charge for Master Plan implementation. He will run the job description by Laura Smead who was on the MP Committee and is the Town Planner in Canton.

Tax Basis

- Acting Chair Maidman asked the Committee what their thoughts are on split tax rate.
- Mr. Shapiro commented that we could go up a few dollars every year for businesses. Do not change resident's rate.
- Mr. Lury agrees with Mr. Shapiro. Shock would set in if increased all at once. He said we are getting the money but what are business owners getting for the payments? It has to be

sold as a package of increases but benefits. More attention needs to be paid to businesses with better services.

- Mr. Berish agrees to a gradual approach. He says do not let it catch up to split tax rate. The biggest area of contention is you may deter new development.
- Mr. Pannone said if rates are tied would the reverse be true. Would raising commercial taxes pull up residential?
- Mr. Shapiro said surrounding towns have higher commercial taxes.
- Acting Chair Maidman asked Mr. Lury if any businesses are exempt from property tax.
- Mr. Lury said religious organizations like temples and churches, private schools, hospitals, 501C3 organizations are exempt. Mr. Maidman asked if urgent care facilities classify as hospitals. Mr. Lury said not if run as a for profit business.
- Acting Chair Maidman said we would need an informal discussion with the Finance Committee. We do not want to send the wrong message to businesses.
- Mr. Shapiro asked if we should informally pressure test and Mr. Maidman said yes.
- Mr. Maidman said P.O. Square is built out until the water treatment substructure is built out. From the Master Plan, P.O. Square was to be made more viable.
- Mr. Pannone said the Master Plan research showed that people want a reason to go to P.O. Square. The deterrent is the waste water. It is really intended to be a destination.
- Mr. Pannone sees Route 1 as a financial benefit to the town where P.O. Square is a cultural benefit to the town.
- Mr. Maidman said in P.O. Square it would be nice to investigate Bank of America.
- Mr. Pannone said he would like to see it as a mini green. Do land swap to Station Street to relocate them. Mr. Maidman will find out who owns the land and how long the lease is. Mr. Pannone said this is a long range idea.
- Delapa properties and Alice Hu are two property owners to have a commerce dialogue with. Mr. Pannone said we should ask them their long term goals and visions. They are the biggest players and perhaps we can help them. Mr. Pannone said maybe there is a way to beautify the treatment plant through grants to make more attractive.
- With reference to the library project Attorney Gelerman has not issued a ruling if Dover Amendment applies. If an agreement is not made it will escalate to land court.
- Acting Chair Maidman said in the center of town there are 4 areas to consider: Alice, Delapa, Andy Nebenzhal and Bank of America.
- Mr. Hauser said that years ago we reached out to Delapa and spoke about putting a small building next to Bank of America and on Pond Street. He was engaged. He ended up refurbishing. He also had an extended conversation with Alice and the Economic Development team. They even got to the point to look for a developer to lease Alice's land. Eli thinks it's good to talk to the owners as its good community relations. He said Route 1 has between 1 and 2 million dollar tax potential. He said to set and manage expectations.
- Mr. Pannone suggested approaching Delapa regarding office space and draft language for Route 1 expansion. This will be placed on the Planning Board Agenda.
- Mr. Berish asked if the fire department has access to 5 story buildings. Acting Chair Maidman said we have a piece of equipment that can reach 6 stories.
- Mr. Maidman will have a conversation with Andy Nebenzhal, Bank of America and Delapa. Mr. Pannone will speak to Alice Hu along with Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Berish.
- Mr. Pannone said we need a strategy for the septic in the town center.
- Mr. Hauser said put the septic at Temple Israel, put at Bank of America, reevaluate the parking lot.
- These will all be preliminary discussions to see if anyone is interested to take this on in this environment.
- Acting Chair Maidman asked what the best way to advance Route 1 is.

- Mr. Shapiro said to have a discussion with the owners of the open land and find out the owners interest.
- Mr. Maidman said he will get the names of the land owners.
- Mr. Maidman said Shaw's Plaza owned by Capital Group is another large parcel. He will ask Mr. Turkington to engage in a dialogue with them when appropriate.
- Mr. Shapiro said something should be done at Heights Plaza even if it is just beautification.

Solar

- Mr. Maidman said the Solar Committee has not yet been approved. Select Board to meet on this. The Energy Advisory Committee will be retained for municipal aggregation program. For new projects they are considering establishing a municipal solar oversight committee on municipal and private land. Could include oversight on sites already established. They could be an intermediary between the developer, town and neighbors. Three members from the Economic Advisory Committee and 3 members from the EDC for 1 year renewable terms.

Summary Document

- Mr. Maidman said we need to let Mr. Turkington and the Select Board know what has been accomplished.
- Mr. Lury said we can report the proposal regarding the split tax rate, interface and discussion with business owners that would yield additional monies. Participate in solar project. Deal with P.O.Square. Have a face to face meeting for feedback from the business community.
- Mr. Lury said Jim touched on the split commercial and residential rate, outreach to business owners in center of town and Route 1 lots for development. The part time planner and what we see for that person to do, grant writing and other things for economic development.
- Mr. Shapiro said driving incremental tax revenue from new commercial and increase split tax attracting new business to support a better quality of life for Sharon residents. Work with regional organizations.
- Mr. Pannone said take all of the elements and put them in buckets for short, mid and long term goals to categorize and how we can join and participate. Get started on rewriting zoning on Route 1 and how to achieve goals. Put it in a format for all boards and committees to follow. What have we achieved and how do we move forward. Promote discussions with development in P.O. Square.

Next meeting dates

- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 11/9, 11/30, 12/14

Adjournment

- The meeting concluded at 8:35 PM