

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes  
7/13/20**

**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 7PM.

**Minutes**

- Mr. Berish moved to accept the minutes of 6/29/20. Mr. Shapiro seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0-0 in favor of approval.

**Discussion**

- Acting Chair Maidman began the discussion regarding concepts and initiative planning.
- Mr. Lury said he reviewed the previously drafted Economic Development report as pertained to Post Office Square. He said as time passes we are still in the same place. Delapa has improved their property as far as visuals for retail and housing. This came out of the initial discussions. The difficulty or lack of waste water treatment is a hindrance in the area and is still there.
- Mr. Berish said he reviewed the Post Office Square notes and thinks it was well done. The biggest challenge remains as the treatment facility. He questioned if a betterment tax was analyzed.
- Mr. Hauser said this plan was from ten years ago. There could have been a treatment plant but land was needed for a low volume system. It could have been done on the Temple Israel site. There are probably 45 owners of 65 properties in the area. The problem is how to get alignment and agreement on how to do this. Mr. Hauser said he spent 3 years doing this. There is not a lot of money to be made in Post Office Square. From a social gathering place it is a benefit to the town. With the current septic, water drains right down North Main Street, the current septic's on Pond and South Main Streets are shared systems and do satisfy current needs.
- Mr. Shapiro said he doesn't see the immediate benefit. He is not sure there is a need when current servicing is being met.
- Mr. Maidman said it's important to know what it's going to take to retain what exists.
- Mr. Pannone said the goal is to retain the center. When the Master Plan was being done he said people wanted more cafes, restaurants and specialty shops. We would need to expand the system to accommodate increase in mixed density in town. Waste water was a part of the discussion.
- Mr. Hauser said the Master Plan fit in from an economic perspective. We need focal points for discussion.
- Mr. Pannone said we need to create short, mid and long term goals.

- Mr. Hauser said look for solutions now for septic in Post Office Square for the future.
- Mr. Maidman said we need a place to begin. Eli's project focuses on how to proceed; it's a starting point. The other reference point is the Master Plan.
- Mr. Shapiro said we need to do something for PO Square. He discussed outdoor seating at Heights Plaza.
- Mr. Hauser said before we begin initiation, there are Rattlesnake Hill, Route 1, PO Square, and Heights areas.
- We need to level set to make things specific. What are the constraints? We need a current state analysis and future analysis. We need to understand the elderly and aging schools.
- Mr. Shapiro said we have not agreed on what we are doing. We have a gap. We are reestablished, how do we take the bull by the horns? Can we raise commercial tax rate?
- Mr. Pannone said we are not here to only discuss Post Office Square but the development of Sharon in general.
- Mr. Shapiro said we should be at the same rate as adjoining towns.
- Mr. Hauser said how can we become competitive. A lot of businesses are fungible, will businesses leave.
- Mr. Shapiro said we need to increase commercial taxes.
- Mr. Maidman said he wanted Mr. Hauser to review the previous project so we can see what it takes to move forward. It was the blueprint for PO Square, Delapa spent money to beautify his properties, some new businesses. These are examples of PO Square that came to fruition.
- Mr. Pannone commented that the Master Plan did quite a bit of surveying. They established goals, needs and wants from everybody. He shared some of the recommendations/goals from the Master Plan. We can look at those goals to modify and reprioritize. The homework is already done for us.
- Mr. Pannone said Heights is vastly underdeveloped. It requires us to modify zoning to induce development to make it more attractive. He said the merchants at Heights Plaza are asking for assistance from the town for marketing. We need to promote business. We have hiking trails that can bring people to Sharon. He said we need to work on the Master Plan goals to break them into short, mid and long term. He said that highlights include finding a new way to grow residential taxes and also improve local business.
- Another high level comment received was the creation of a town green. This attraction would improve the economics of PO Square. It could draw more people. Perhaps grants from the MAPC would help. Maybe we can increase density in the center of town. There is a give and take in all of this.
- We could create a guide to start business that's user friendly. We could create a website for Economic Development Master Plan.
- Mr. Pannone said we desperately need a Town Planner. Mr. Maidman said the Planning Board budget has \$11,000 for a town planner but we can tap into the \$76,000 in the Kendall Funds. This is contingent on the October 5<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting. Once that is done we can quickly get started. The Town Planner could be a rep for the EDC Committee.
- Mr. Pannone said the Master Plan provides a mandate to execute some of these issues.
- Mr. Maidman said the Master Plan is precise. He summarized the discussion that there are lessons learned at Post Office Square to keep close in mind for the town at large. The Master Plan is the blueprint to build on.
- Mr. Pannone said to look for innovative businesses and new technologies. We can provide settings that community is accommodating for us.
- Mr. Shapiro said we need to be forward thinking.
- Mr. Pannone said our job is what we can do to help create dialogue and foster.
- The goals for the next meeting are modification, initial next steps and completion.

**Adjournment**

- The meeting concluded at 8:22PM