

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes  
7/27/20**

**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 7:04PM.
- The next EDC meeting dates are 8/10 and 8/24

**Minutes**

- The Committee voted 6-0-0 in favor of approval of the minutes of 7/13/20.

**Discussion**

- Acting Chair Maidman began the discussion by stating that at the last meeting, we benefited from Mr. Hauser discussing the P.O. Square Plan from years ago. Mr. Pannone had reviewed the Master Plan. Its current guide encompasses most of the Town and has input from residents. It is up to us to figure out how to do this. Tonight we will dig into the Master Plan. Mr. Maidman said we need to determine what we know and should know. We do not have a Chamber of Commerce but we do have a Lion's Club, MAPC, and Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce. We need to better understand these agencies.
- Route 1 is a challenge. Parcels are discontinuance, wetlands have weird shapes, requires cooperation with other towns for water and sewage. We have an existing set of zoning for these parcels. There is a height restriction on Route 1 but given the constraints, the idea could be to go higher. There are a number of businesses that could be ripe for land development. There are opportunities that need to be explored. Covid has impaired this but it doesn't mean it can't be done. There are initiatives we can undertake.
- Mr. Maidman said to Mr. Berish that you are active in the development world and you know the challenges. Looking at the Route 1 corridor what do you think we need to understand?
- Mr. Berish said you need to gain access to potable water. We are working in the realm of Title V. Portions of Route 1 on the Walpole line are in no man's land and make it difficult for retail. Sharon is stuck in between two Route 95 exits. It is however viable for industrial and offices in constraints of Title V.
- Mr. Pannone said that Mr. Berish made a great point in suggesting a local Chamber of Commerce to help us identify properties. He said we need to reach out to local chambers to say we have the desire to bolster business, we have a Master Plan and we are open.
- Mr. Berish suggested starting with the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Lury asked what the current height restrictions for Route 1 and Mr. Pannone said two stories.
- Mr. Maidman said that Stoughton is undergoing a transformation in the center of town.

- Mr. Lury stated they hired a planner who started a program to bring in businesses. Stoughton has spent money rerouting traffic in the center to make the flow better. It is an aggressive program with regular meetings. There is even an idea to relocate the Post Office and put in a mixed use development. Positive work is being performed.
- Mr. Lury will check to see if Stoughton has benefited from the Smart Growth Fund.
- Mr. Maidman asked Mr. Hauser to share his vision from his experiences he had on Route 1 to what is suited for P.O. Square and Heights.
- Mr. Hauser said it's clear we are not adding manufacturing or a gas station. Look at We Works type of model or remote learning centers. There may be good locations for warehousing on Route 1. Heights he stated does not have a lot of potential in terms of the foot print. There are a lot of options for Shaw's Plaza. There is a lot of land on the way to the highway. In P.O. Square there are 60-70 parcels with 40 owners. The majority of the parcels are owned by Alice Hu and Delapa. The recommendation from 10- 12 years ago was to create a town center with upgrading this town from the 1940's to the 2000's. A lot of zoning was done. Garden plazas were encouraged. You can build 3.5 stories in height to get rid of driveways and make it more walkable. It is a better use from an economic perspective to create gateways to space between the Town Hall and Library in terms of creating a draw. Bring in more restaurants for nighttime activities.
- Mr. Pannone said to make it a village. Create an alleyway from Town Hall to Penny Lane. There is a lot of poorly used space.
- Mr. Pannone said it feels like we are getting into the weeds faster than we should. The Master Plan has prioritization listed out. He said the book is already written and we should go back to this.
- Mr. Shapiro said on page 208 of the Master Plan, fiscal sustainability is discussed. We need to figure out what we want to do and what the fiscal impact is.
- Mr. Pannone said that P.O. Square is #1 priority but it's a long term goal. Break it down into achievable pieces.
- Mr. Maidman said to Mr. Berish that last meeting the role of taxes and tax incentives were discussed. We do not have a split tax rate. Is a split tax rate necessary to attract businesses?
- Mr. Berish said he thinks the split tax rate is important. We are in a minority in the surrounding community. He does not think it would scare people away. He said we should be aggressive as possible not to leave money on the table.
- Mr. Maidman said 6% of taxes in town are from businesses. This equates to 4 million dollars.
- To summarize, Mr. Maidman said we are beginning to make progress. We need to create an inventory of land on Route 1, owners and current uses. He stated 4 Daughters was sold and is in limbo because the license was not yet granted. He will create the Sharon business property inventory. Mr. Berish will contact Neponset Valley, MAPC and Metro South to garner more information from these local/regional resources. Mr. Lury will determine how Stoughton Center has structured itself with the planners. Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Hauser will sort the Master Plan objectives into short and long term goals. Mr. Pannone will investigate the future reuse of the library. Mr. Shapiro will generate tax information and comparisons.
- Mr. Maidman said in a few weeks we will know the status of the schools. He would not be surprised if entrepreneurs created programs for teachers and were looking for a local space.
- Mr. Shapiro said we should create something to unify businesses.
- Mr. Pannone said the challenge is not to work in a vacuum; work with the Town Accountant if you are discussing finances.
- Mr. Maidman said having a Town Planner would greatly help. There are monies in a fund for planning and Mr. Maidman will discuss with Mr. Turkington.

- Mr. Lury suggested creating an entrepreneurial support group in Sharon. Mr. Berish said we should tap into the brain power and resources we have here and network with this pool of people.

**Adjournment**

- The meeting concluded at 8:15PM