

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes
2/16/21**

EDC Members

Rob Maidman, Chair	Alan Lury absent
Jim Berish	Pasqualino Pannone
Eli Hauser absent	Xander Shapiro
Milena Virrankoski	Aleksander Tomic absent

Other Attendees

none	
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Administration

- The EDC meeting began at 7:04PM.

Minutes

- The Committee voted 4-0-1 in favor of approval of the minutes of 2/1/21 minutes.

Discussion

Communication methods for Businesses

- Chair Maidman provided a recap of the recent Select Board meeting in which it was discussed how to help small businesses in town. He said he was concerned with using a town public website for commercial purposes.
- Mr. Pannone said we missed the milestones for retailers. He suggested perhaps an email blast regarding businesses would be more appropriate.
- Chair Maidman said he is in agreement with Mr. Pannone that when you miss a known retail period everyone suffers.
- Ms. Virrankoski suggested creating an artificial town phone book. It could also include child care, and health care providers as examples.
- Chair Maidman said that at the 2/1/21 meeting we talked about a neutral site for businesses. He sent the Committees thoughts to the Select Board to create a link in the town website that leads to a neutral site being input only with no dialogue. It could be something similar to an announcement board.
- Mr. Pannone said we need a stand-alone mechanism which is business centric.

- Mr. Shapiro expressed that a site needs to be run by businesses not the town. EDC could support. He said there are a lot of experts willing to help
- Chair Maidman suggested they ask Realtor Roni Thaler to ask other relators for donations to set up a website or wait for the Town Planner to help put in place.

Interim Report

- Chair Maidman shared the key subjects within the report and asked if we want to deliver a report or present a PowerPoint.
- Mr. Shapiro said he preferred a PowerPoint as it is better for questions and answers. State within the report, here are the priorities, here are the considerations. Provide broad strokes with a little background.
- Mr. Berish agreed with the PowerPoint idea as well.
- Mr. Pannone suggested including a google map to be interactive to show developable land.
- Chair Maidman suggested 5-8 slides listing what, why and preliminary ideas. We can do in conjunction with the Master Plan which is a roadmap of what should be done. He said he will provide an outline to the members by weeks end. There is no date yet for the presentation.

Town Planner

- Chair Maidman said Mr. Turkington has expanded the position to 20 hours. The posting went to 70 recipient sites. One EDC member will sit in on the interview process.

Other

- Chair Maidman said that he, Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Tomic are on the Energy Advisory Committee subcommittee. They will work on the solar projects at East, Gavin's Pond and the landfill. They will help to identify additional opportunities as well. . They will listen to the property owners concerns, work with vendors and address feasibility and design. Identify additional sites that would lend itself to key issues. A lot depends on external factors. There is a complicated set of moving parts. Tax incentives rule this industry.
- Mr. Shapiro said he can see the benefits of a joint committee for execution. The process can use the committee to help with outreach. He said he feels optimistic.
- Chair Maidman said there is a strict regulation on covering the cap of the landfill: technical discussions are needed for this fragile piece of land.
- Mr. Pannone said we should not micromanage the road. The access issues are up to the contractor to meet all state regulations.

Brainstorming

- Chair Maidman said he has read about restaurants that have survived through Covid and he noticed they are in a walking community. Sharon does not have this.

- Mr. Shapiro said there is great diversity in the stores at Sharon Heights Plaza and we should get the word out. Chair Maidman said we will take our time with the official mechanism.
- Mr. Pannone suggested a flea market at the lake and invite local vendors to sell food.
- Ms. Virrankoski said to look at outdoor settings and food trucks.
- Chair Maidman said he will get in touch with Crescent Ridge to see what they are planning.
- Mr. Pannone suggested a beer garden at the lake,
- Mr. Shapiro said to ask Crescent Ridge if they would run an event hosting local businesses.
- Chair Maidman said the Gallery is tied up with Mass Highway regarding the road configuration. Nothing can happen with businesses until this is resolved.
- Mr. Shapiro suggested making it easier to facilitate take out.
- Mr. Berish said he will supply his research on taxation. This will be added to the next agenda.
- Mr. Pannone said the Master Plan suggested a local business group is formed to help each other. This was a strong suggestion by the writer of the Master Plan.
- Mr. Shapiro said he will write to the Chamber of Commerce to see how other committees have done it. Chair Maidman asked if there are any constraints for the EDC using the Chamber.

Next meeting dates

- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 3/1, 3/15, 3/29

Adjournment

- The meeting concluded at 8:10PM by a vote of 6-0-0.