

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes  
3/1/21**

**EDC Members**

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

**Other Attendees**

none	
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**Administration**

- Chair Maidman called the EDC meeting to order at 7:02PM.

**Minutes**

- The Committee voted 4-0-2 in favor of approval of the minutes of 2/16/21 minutes as amended.

**Discussion**

**Communication Methods for Businesses**

- Chair Maidman commented that there is a potential design for “Sharon Business Connection” created by the Webmaster. It is a single site that anyone can look at. It’s a chance for Town business owners to post what’s most relevant. There will be no public commentary.
- Mr. Lury asked who maintains and how does it get maintained.
- Mr. Maidman said he will speak with Mr. Turkington for more answers and will distribute materials to the Committee.
- Ms. Virrankoski asked how people will find it.
- Chair Maidman said they could send a notice in the quarterly utility or tax bills, put in PTSO mailings, Facebook groups, Sharon cable, COA etc.
- Ms. Virrankoski said it needs to go beyond Sharon’s borders and reach border towns.
- Chair Maidman said with regards to Crescent Ridge, they might resume their farmer’s market but they are waiting for more clarity regarding COVID next steps.

- With reference to the decision regarding Sharon Gallery, it is still under MassDot, nothing can happen. It's a slow process. State legislatures are working on this.
- With reference to the Town Planner, resumes received did not have the level of expertise needed. MAPC is an alternative. Waiting on a response to see if they have available resources.

### **Interim Report**

- Chair Maidman said that we have a foundation for the report. Regarding the tax situation we can show comparative burdens and other towns. We can discuss business opportunities and we can show constraints of what's holding us back like the height restrictions on Route 1 and Post Office Square. We can provide conclusion and recommendations in terms of reaching out to existing businesses. Now is not a good time. Chair Maidman said he will reach out to Delapa and hoping Mr. Pannone can speak with Alice of Mandarin Taste.

### **Energy Advisory Subcommittee**

- Chair Maidman said that he, Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Tomic are on the Energy Advisory Committee Subcommittee. They are adding a good perspective and approach to the Committee. Tonight the project partner showed details that affect abutters so they can be addressed timely. They are having a good impact on complementing the skills of the other group and are on track. One outstanding matter could be the extra charge to regional power. Other locations will be considered. Chair Maidman wanted the EDC involved in solar project because of neighbors' concerns. Build consensus so something positive can move ahead.

### **Other**

- A small discussion ensued regarding the challenges of potential residences being built on the service station site on North Main Street.
- Mr. Tomic reviewed his tax analysis he prepared for the Committee of Sharon and said that Sharon has one of the highest residential rates in the State.
- Mr. Shapiro said we are higher in the State in residential rates and lower in commercial rates.
- Mr. Hauser said we have limited resources to put in businesses. We need to increase height, use and density in business districts. He said the Master Plan points to increasing density on Route 1.
- Mr. Berish commented that comparing costs Sharon charges much less than surrounding towns for businesses. As an example at 1 Merchant Street in Sharon its \$1.18 square foot compared to similar industrial multi-tenant properties in Easton at a rate of \$1.35 or Walpole at \$3.00 a square foot. He said you cannot get hung up on tax rate, its dollars. He said we need a way to gradually get to increase and provide a reasonable approach.
- Mr. Tomic said there are 85 commercial properties in Sharon.

- Mr. Berish said we are in a situation where the tax rate is well below the market. We need to correct that residents do not subsidize everything.
- Chair Maidman said this was a great discussion and we need to figure out the right forward path. He suggested we invite the Town Assessor to comment how commercial properties are evaluated.

### **Next meeting dates**

- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 3/15, 4/5, 4/26

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting concluded at 8:37PM by a vote of 6-0-0 as Mr. Tomic moved to close the meeting and Mr. Shapiro seconded the motion.