

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes
3/15/21**

EDC Members

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

Other Attendees

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| Jeff Funk – Town Assessor | |
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Administration

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

Minutes

- The vote on the 3/1/21 minutes will be postponed until the next meeting.

Tax Rates

- Jeff Funk, Town Assessor spoke to the EDC about both the commercial and residential tax rates in Sharon. He provided a list of the top ten tax payers in town.
- Mr. Pannone suggested identifying properties with growth potential to increase appeal and attraction in Sharon. A discussion on the value of properties ensued.
- Mr. Shapiro asked what we can do to drum up revenue. Mr. Funk said that the Sharon Gallery could be a great source of revenue. He also said that the Eli apartments once occupied will increase revenue.
- Mr. Pannone asked if there is a new development and that has a biotech versus an office tenant would biotech be of greater value to the town because it is assessed higher. Mr. Funk said yes as they would be taxing equipment.
- Chair Maidman asked if Mr. Funk feels that Sharon has the environment to increase the commercial yield, maintain same rate for residential and commercial or have commercial higher like in surrounding towns. Mr. Funk said in the current environment, we are far off from splitting rate. It could have a harmful impact. The Board of Assessors recommends the rate or splitting rate. The BOS makes the final decision.
- Mr. Shapiro asked if there are any issues with collections due to COVID and Mr. Funk said they are not losing much.

- Chair Maidman asked if signs are treated as personal property and Mr. Funk replied they are treated as out buildings on the property.
- It was discussed that the type of tenant can increase the assessment value.
- Mr. Lury said it is good we have been educated on this so we are able to learn what we can and cannot do. This changes incorrect assumptions. It comes down to a mix of properties to obtain more tax monies; not just a standard office building.
- Places like Cambridge with sources like biotech and hi-tech can generate significant tax dollars because of the business they focus on. For us we need to increase density to get an incremental increase in Shaw's Plaza or Heights Plaza to generate more revenue.
- Mr. Hauser said this was a good exercise in terms of understanding mechanics. It's good to know the different types of businesses that generate different dollars. We need to prepare a spreadsheet to get a sense of the magnitude if raise business taxes. We need to return to a strategic overview with a majority of the monies in revisiting Route 1. Heights Plaza and P.O. Square are nice to have. We need to identify the biggest sources of future opportunity on Route 1. We need a 5-10 year plan.
- Mr. Shapiro commented what do we recommend?
- Mr. Hauser said create an inventory of revenue stream in residential and existing businesses – Route 1, Shaw's Plaza, Gallery, Heights Plaza, P.O. Square. What is the gross revenue, timeline for achievement, is it being addressed? If not make a recommendation.
- Mr. Tomic said we need to figure out the split rate. We are spreading to thin on residential. It is important to decide who we want to go after in terms of new business.
- Mr. Pannone said the best thing for Shaw's is the Gallery. Competition will draw more people. It is not up to us to make the determination to create opportunity.
- Ms. Virrankoski said it would be nice to market our town to other neighboring communities like the lake for example.
- Chair Maidman said there is a lot more to think about.
- Mr. Shapiro commented that the Master Plan suggested we need more restaurants but the EDC needs to focus on big revenue sources.

Town Planner

- Chair Maidman said Mr. Turkington received 4 applicants for the Planner position. Mr. Pannone will be a part of the interviewing team.

Communication Methods for Businesses

- Chair Maidman said he will get in touch with Jeff Rose to figure out how the business connection proposal will work.

- Chair Maidman spoke with Anthony Delapa Jr and overall COVID has not affected them. The space above 12 Pond Street is vacant. Mr. Delapa is not sure of what refurbishments he will be undertaking. It is a 6000- 8000 foot space. He will keep in touch with Mr. Maidman regarding plans. Also behind 47 Pond Street is a tract of land that is zoned for a new building. Delapa owns this and needs to determine what to do with it and said that mixed commercial and residential is best.
- Mr. Pannone said this could be an opportunity to make a walkway and connect apartments with East Chestnut. This may be an opportunity to work with Delapa to create something pleasing. He said that Alice of Mandarin Taste was not there when he went in.

Interim Report

- Chair Maidman said that regarding preparing a report to the Select Board, we do not need an interim report. We need to work on final recommendations to include the conceptual part and nuts and bolts. There is a lot to present.

Energy Advisory Subcommittee

- Chair Maidman said it is the final stages for the solar company to submit its application for the landfill. Mass DEP will make the decision of what is and isn't possible.
- Mr. Shapiro said he thinks the skills of the Energy and Economic Development Committee representatives couple well. We need to listen to neighbors to see what needs to be accommodated. Asking the right questions of the development partner is important

Next meeting dates

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

Adjournment

- The meeting concluded at 8:51PM by a vote of 8-0-0 as Mr. Pannone moved to close the meeting and Mr. Tomic seconded the motion.