

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes  
6/14/21**

**EDC Members**

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

**Other Attendees**

Elizabeth Ellis	Maria De La Fuente

**Administration**

- Chair Maidman called the EDC meeting to order at 7:00PM via ZOOM.

**Minutes**

- Mr. Shapiro moved to accept the minutes of 5/17/21 and Ms. Virrankoski seconded the motion. The Committee voted 4-0-1 (Lury) in favor of approval.

**Master Plan**

- Ms. Ellis updated the Committee on what we are seeking to achieve regarding the Master Plan.
- Mr. Shapiro provided an update on the Energy Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Ellis updated the Committee on economic vitality and said she is creating an interactive map; map of trails, discussed expanding the tax base, spoke about incentivizing businesses to incorporate more green standards.
- Mr. Berish said there is a huge incentive through Mass Save for “green lighting”.
- Ms. Ellis said for mixed use she is still looking at it. A discussion included surveying businesses regarding positive and negative experiences they have in Sharon in setting up a business. Mr. Shapiro said he would assist.
- With reference to septic/sewer, this has occupied a lot of her time. This is the elephant in the room as far as all issues. She suggests put perspective into a municipal wastewater upgrade guide which is easily accessible. She is looking at grants.
- Ms. De La Fuente said in Foxboro they have a hookup for sewer to Mansfield and Norton. They pay fees to connect in a pay as you go method. Mr. Maidman asked that Maria provide connectivity where Mansfield is in relation to Sharon.
- Mr. Berish said the Jehovah’s Witness church is for sale but the existing zoning inhibits because it is zoned residential.
- Ms. De La Fuente wants to suggest making the zoning bylaws more clear. She is going to discuss with Mr. Turkington.

## Select Board Report

- Chair Maidman said the real substance for tonight's meeting is to identify the key elements of the report that needs to be included. At the next meeting define any subject someone is interested in. Basically topic, reason why it is important, pros, cons and recommendations. He said he wants this completed by the end of the summer then the Select Board can choose what or what not to adopt. Then we can move into how we find opportunities for available space and work with who we have.
- Chair Maidman asked the members what the top issues and subjects they feel needs to be addressed.
- Mr. Lury said Route 1 should be the initial focus. The number of parcels to be developed is limited. Work with owners to identify what their objectives are to develop. Can we help push development? Also on Route 1 any commonality of those businesses where we have opportunity for sites available, can we focus on certain industries to become a target? Focus on industry specific like Norwood is known for automobile dealers. Can Sharon identify a business to focus on in that strip? If we can change Jehovah's Witness property zoning that would be great. All areas have zoning, sewage and water in this area.
- Ms. Virrankoski said the key element is sewer. What is the cost? We need to improve the face of the Town so that everyone uses services available. Market Sharon. Available space is unclear for new businesses.
- Mr. Tomic said we need to address what can we do for new businesses, existing businesses and how can we optimize the tax structure. He suggested we perform a survey to determine barriers and limitations. Where can we be helpful to businesses? Look at the tax structure – want to see how much potential business would increase taxes. Put potential sources of income on paper. What are businesses we are not thinking about? How can we leverage our position? Think about a regional approach.
- Mr. Berish said to think of a reasonable step tax proposal and how we can become more equitable with neighbors. Regarding Route 1, can we connect to a neighborhood system or develop infrastructure for septic in that area. Most land is underdeveloped due to waste water. Can we look more into SHS as an asset to create public/private partnership to tap into the 50% used capacity? There is a host of ideas. Can companies be in partnership with SHS? Are there opportunities to create more flexible zoning for commercial properties like height requirements?
- Mr. Shapiro said we need a good structure. An objective could be economic value creation. For new business get more taxes, get more employment, and expand services. For existing business, assess values, split tax rate, tourism and marketing, Expand use and reuse. Reuse library, overall town economic tourism, more use of town facilities sets feeling of where you want to be.
- Ms. De La Fuente said she is starting a business guide. This will be friendly for the lay person. It will be step by step. It will include small green things you can do for your business. Add home business to guide. It can let people know what permits are needed, dimensional requirements etc. She said we have a sewer and zoning problem.
- Chair Maidman said he will compile and get back to everyone in the form of a working outline: logical and sequential. Conclusion and recommendations quantify and qualify issues, positive and negative impacts and recommendations.
- Mr. Shapiro said it has to be about recommendations, action oriented.
- Work in teams to develop.

## Next meeting dates

- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 7/19, 8/23

## **Adjournment**

- Mr. Tomic moved to close the meeting and Mr. Lury seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to conclude at 8:25 PM