

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes
8/10/20**

EDC Members

Rob Maidman, Acting Chair	Alan Lury
Jim Berish	Pasqualino Pannone absent
Eli Hauser absent	Xander Shapiro

Other Attendees

none	
------	--

Administration

- The EDC meeting began at 7:05PM.
- The next EDC meeting dates are 8/10 and 8/24

Minutes

- The Committee voted 4-0-0 in favor of approval of the minutes of 7/27/20.

Discussion

- Acting Chair Maidman began the discussion by stating that the meetings held are to map and provide guidance information to the Select Board and Town Planner to test concepts, share points of view and find a critical path moving toward something important. What is our mission? What degree of guidance/hands on do we think we need to have when we get administrative and professional support. What role should we think for ourselves in the near term?
- Mr. Berish said we would be a good liaison between boards when trying to move projects forward so key projects are not hanging unfinished.
- Mr. Shapiro agreed with Mr. Berish. He said we should be putting value on every project and sell ideas to the Select Board. Help advance and do outreach. Don't be conceptual without an action plan.
- Mr. Lury said as we go through the process, effectively look at all on the table and then rank for achievability, short, medium and long and decide best impact. We need the buy in from the Select Board and assist the new hire to get off on the right foot. We need to identify objectives. This group can give direction.
- Mr. Maidman said he spoke to Mr. Turkington and his preference is to wait to hire a Planner until the budget is approved in October. Mr. Maidman said he asked Mr. Turkington to solicit candidates. Use the Kendall monies as seed money. There are a lot of grants available to pay for planning to explore. The real question is, in recent history, Sharon has reacted to developers but does little advertising. We are more reactive than take initiatives. How hands on does EDC need to be or stay as advisory.
- Mr. Shapiro said he thinks a hybrid model would be better. We do not know the particular expertise of the person to be hired. The concern is we are not only support for this person. We need to work on economic development first.
- Mr. Maidman said the planner should be support to Planning Board and the EDC.
- Mr. Maidman discussed solar development as an opportunity.

- Mr. Berish said he receives 2 calls each week to rent his building's rooftops for solar. He thinks large owner occupied buildings would be good for solar.
- Mr. Lury said that regarding, Stoughton Center, he reached out to the Town Planner. They are trying to get a grant for businesses. He said he will speak with the Planner this week to see what types of grants were applied for, tripping points, and websites. He has networked with other Chambers of Commerce. He said the Friends of Stoughton Center organized a 501C3. Is this helpful to achieve goals.
- Mr. Maidman asked how many landowners there are in Stoughton Center and Mr. Lury said he will find out. Mr. Maidman also said he wants to know what is underneath the infrastructure – municipal sewage. What regional and state agencies did Stoughton reach out to for assistance? He said he wants to know what defines the area.
- Mr. Berish had conversations with Neponset River Chamber and South Metro Chamber of Commerce. Sharon is included in both the charters. He said he spoke with Tom O'Rourke who is charge of the Neponset Chamber. He will pass projects along. They will bring opportunities to Sharon. The President of South Metro gave Mr. Berish's contact info to the Mass Office of Business Development and this group has grants for manufacturing. They are trying to attract businesses to Massachusetts. They are willing to come speak to the EDC. We should be shovel ready should an opportunity arise this way Sharon can be a player.
- Mr. Maidman said it would be nice to have representatives from the various chambers come and speak to the EDC.
- The Committee briefly discussed who they thought the new Planner should report to.
- The library discussion was postponed to a later date.
- The Committee then had a brief conversation regarding the Town tax rate and the need to have differentiating rates for commercial and residential. Mr. Maidman said he does not know what the process is to change the commercial rate. The Committee agreed that there is a strong positive case to be made to increase commercial rate and it is in the best interest of the Town.
- Mr. Maidman said we can prepare a list of skillsets that would help the planner. They can assemble a table of contents for what Sharon needs to publicize itself. This is an essential first step.
- Mr. Maidman said he spoke with the Town Assessor and got a list of owners on Route 1 and size of land. He could not get the size of the lots and the encumbrances. He asked if our efforts should be on Post Office Square. Do we feel any effort will have appreciable tax generation or just beautify the area?
- Mr. Maidman said with regards to Sharon Commons there is still no firm contractual agreement with the 1st commercial setting. There is no documentation. At the last Planning Board meeting there was a discussion about a tenant who wanted a gas station in an area not zoned for that. This will be brought to Town Meeting with a 2/3 vote to change the zoning. It is all speculative right now.

Next meeting dates

8/31, 9/14, 9/29

Adjournment

- The meeting concluded at 8:30PM.

