

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

**EDC Meeting Minutes  
12/07/20**

**EDC Members**

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

**Other Attendees**

Avi Shemtov	
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**Administration**

- The EDC meeting began at 7:06PM.

**Minutes**

- The Committee voted 2-0-2 in favor of approval of the minutes of 10/26/20.

**Discussion**

**EDC Appointees**

- Select Board decided to hold interviews for applicants to the EDC. This should be resolved by early January.

**Solar Sub Committee**

- There are 3 open positions for this committee. Action has been deferred.

**Town Planner**

- Mr. Turkington will let Mr. Maidman know when the Town Planner position will be posted.

**Key Topics for Select Board Progress Report**

- Mr. Berish commented split tax recommendation that can turn into action. He said that Mr. Shapiro's spreadsheet was good to use. How do we use our part of the 25-30 hour part time planner position to execute ideas and do research.
- Mr. Maidman said the split tax is a revenue generator but any taxes on businesses can be a problem for existing businesses. Should we set criteria like the amount of time in town?
- Mr. Pannone suggested that the split tax rate should go into effect in 2022. Avoid increasing someone's burden.
- Mr. Shapiro commented that we need to figure out the right schedule for split tax. Phase in, in right way. As things are available can we build higher on Route 1?
- Mr. Pannone said if office type development makes sense; reach out to a broker to determine if there is a market. Do our research. Reach out to experts. Then go to Mr. Turkington and say there is a market demand in our area.
- Mr. Maidman said he will put the basic text in place and send to everyone.

- Mr. Hauser suggested the format be key elements to include objectives, targets and focus. Prepare 3-5 bullets per section. Generate additional revenues, solicit business, and provide employment opportunities and excitement. Execution to include rezoning, solicitation of vendors and partners and planner. The current state includes an 80 million dollar budget and 6-8% is business. Goal is to reach 12 – 15 % businesses. This would equate to 3-6 million dollars in additional revenue. He said give the lay of the land and give a path forward. He said we lost tenants because of micromanaging.

### **Solar**

- Acting Chair Maidman said that at East the solar construction is complete. It will generate in January. Other two sites - landfill and Gavin's Pond have just begun. There is a detailed study being done by Eversource. The power generation exceeds the grid and needs to be studied.

### **Businesses in Town**

- Acting Chair Maidman commented that Mr. Shemtov, business owner in Town has asked why Sharon is not doing more to support local businesses.
- We need to investigate extension of liquor licenses and defer payments.
- Mr. Maidman said that Mr., Shemtov cited examples and Mr. Maidman wanted to hear from someone that was hit hard during COVID times.
- Mr. Hauser said PO Square needs more people working there to support the local businesses.
- Ask Crescent Ridge how they are able to do so well.
- At 7:53 PM, Mr. Shemtov joined the meeting. All members introduced themselves.
- Mr. Shemtov said that businesses are affected most by regulations. Simcha is fine dining and he keeps staff paid.
- We need avenues to create vibrancy.
- Mr. Shemtov suggested more indirect has a bigger effect like a farmers market. We need to find a better way to capture other towns coming here.
- Mr. Shapiro asked how we build on this. What are ideas for an eating pavilion?
- Mr. Shemtov said there are pieces in place. We need to create an intentional reason for people to come here.
- Discussion ensued.
- Mr. Hauser said the Heights Plaza is not pretty. We need to create a homier environment.
- Mr. Shemtov suggested a food truck round up and use the lake.
- Mr. Maidman asked if there are any other burdens that could be deferred beside the liquor license.
- Mr. Shemtov said the liquor license is something the town could do. He appreciates the town worked on this.
- How can we make Sharon a place that small businesses can survive?
- Mr. Hauser said there is a marketing info problem. Get people to know what businesses exist. Create public events. Create awareness and create based on different business areas.
- Mr. Shapiro said the info received was full of great ideas. This can be added to the Economic Development Report because Economic Development is what we are about.
- Mr. Berish said the lake is our differentiator. Tap that asset. Why can't summer concerts be accompanied by food truck round ups, beer garden, and farmers market? This would be a great way to bring surrounding areas to Sharon.
- Mr. Shemtov said there is no real business community networking in town.

- Mr. Hauser said we need advertising and business interaction. We need to create a platform for the community to come together.
- Mr. Berish said Sharon is the least participating Town as per the various Chambers.
- Mr. Pannone said the Master Plan economic portion wants a business centric community that works and supports each other. We need to desperately work on this as a committee. We need to work with actionable items. Let's walk away saying this is what we are doing next.
- Mr. Shemtov said we are not so small not to have a Chamber of Commerce.
- Acting Chair Maidman said to Mr. Shemtov that you have given us a lot to think about. He appreciated him attending the meeting and providing his perspective.
- Mr. Berish said we need to coagulate manpower now.
- Mr. Pannone and Mr. Hauser said to keep the momentum going.
- Mr. Shapiro said a Facebook group could be a quasi-chamber. Its elements to a campaign.
- Mr. Maidman said we would need a neutral forum on the town website.

### **Next meeting dates**

- The next scheduled EDC meeting dates include: 1/4, 1/19 Tuesday, 2/1, 2/16 Tuesday and 3/1

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting concluded at 8:57 PM by a vote of 5-0-0.