

Town of Pepperell Economic Development Advisory Committee

1 Main Street, Pepperell, Massachusetts 01463-1644

Minutes – February 16, 2023

Committee Members Present:

Stephen Themelis, Chair

Joan Ladik, Clerk

Lindsey Allard

Absent:

Nicole Murphy

Lynne Archambault

Guests:

Jennifer Gingras, Pepperell Town Planner

Theresa LeBlanc, President Pepperell Garden Club

Travis Condon, North Central Mass Chamber of Commerce (NCMCC)

Sandie Cataldo, Senior Manager of Economic Development NCMCC

The unofficial meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM. Pledge of Allegiance took place.

Meeting was recorded.

1. Chair Steve Themelis introduced Jennifer Gingras who provided an update on a number of planning projects currently in the works.
 - a. The Wayfinding Committee is working on maps that will be located in kiosks on Railroad Square, the Rotary and Town Hall areas.
 - b. The One stop for Growth grant - work will be done on the rotary, decreasing lane size, increasing sidewalk areas, and adding in crosswalks with blinking lights that will work when a pedestrian needs to cross. The sidewalk area has been given a boost of funding from the schools to add sidewalks from Varnum Brook up to the Nissitissit School entrance.
 - c. In discussion of Railroad Square and the Main Street corridor, Jenny asked for suggestions on how many benches and planters should be added, as well as a cost for those items. In this regard, Jenny noted that AARP offers grants to towns up to \$50K for adding Senior and Disability access.
 - d. The Zoning Working Group is working to change the rules for accessory apartments, and there is a grant available for designing those apartments.
 - e. In conclusion, Jenny suggests we try to create a survey to find out what people want to see in the town and update the Table of Uses document. Do people want more restaurants, breweries, more recreation for kids, and adults? Steve noted that we have not had a survey for over 10 years, and it would be a good idea to create one for the current population.
2. Chair, Steve Themelis turned to the guests in the audience as the discussion moved to the Adopt an Island (spot). He briefly discussed what had been worked on at earlier

meetings and the information that the Select Board provided in regard to various areas that could be reserved by Businesses or townsfolk to landscape. Joan Ladik will share the information from Joyce Morrow, former EDAC member, who worked with Jenny Gingras and developed an application and rules and regulations for the Adopt an Island program. The discussion was a lengthy one, including many comments from Theresa LeBlanc, President of the Garden club. The Garden Club and the Invasive Plant Committee just want to ensure that the plants used, or recommended are native and will last in the areas that will be landscaped. Theresa noted that Garden Club members were concerned that folks signing up may not follow through and the areas will not be well maintained. She does not want the Garden Club to be responsible for the maintenance once this program is established but it is worthwhile to try it. A question was asked regarding who will monitor all these locations to ensure they are being well cared for. Steve suggested the DPW, and will speak with Mark Matthews to find out if the Select Board has any suggestions. At the next meeting we will review the application and rules, discuss the locations and signage, and move forward finding businesses or towns people.

3. North Central Mass Chamber of Commerce

Chair Steve Themelis introduced Travis Condon, Public Affairs Manager and Sandie Cataldo, Senior Manager of Economic Development of the NCMCC. Travis made a wonderful presentation that identified all the projects this group works on and how they could assist us in networking, social media, small business development, tech support, grants, loans, scholarships, travel and tourism and so much more.

At the end of the presentation questions were asked, and Jenny Gingras asked if funding and business plan development could be an offering from the Chamber, if Welcome sign funding could be provided, if more information could be provided regarding the building façade program, and if there was a possibility of funding to help with roadwork needed at our industrial park to keep it accessible to business.

4. Next meeting date:

March 23, 2023