



Town of Pepperell Economic Development Advisory Committee

1 Main Street, Pepperell, Massachusetts 01463-1644

Meeting Minutes-May 21 2020

Committee Members Present:

Mark Mathews, Chair
Joyce Morrow, Clerk
Stephen Themelis
Chuck Walkovich
Phil Lenker
Chet Babineau
Kelli Kinney

Others Present:

Craig Hansen

Meeting Convened at 5:30 PM. Pledge of Allegiance took place. Meeting was recorded.

1. Minutes of the April 16, 2020 meeting

Minutes of the April 16th meeting were accepted and approved.

2. Discussion

Chair briefed Committee on tonight's agenda items. Craig Hansen was introduced to the Committee members. Craig presented a brief overview of the PF Collaborative, it's plans and programs. Craig gave background: PFC is a non-profit formed about 1.5 years ago. Its mission is to redevelop the PFC property into a multi-purpose community center for arts, recreation, education. PFC consists of a group of volunteers/passionate citizens who just want to see this property redeveloped and make it a multi-generational hub of activity. (See slides for more details.) Craig was soliciting assistance from EDAC members to identify potential long-term tenants, to help support and drive any zoning changes for the PFC location to support light commercial tenant opportunities which currently are restricted; and to help recruit volunteers and required board-level expertise. PFC also needs help in evaluating the condition of the kitchen, equipment, and lease viability.

Committee members agreed that zoning was an issue which needed to be addressed. Suggestions and offers were made to further discussion with MOBD/MassDevelopment regarding a feasibility/market study for the PFC property. First step is to connect with TA

and get Town support in identifying immediate projects (e.g., downtown beautification, 1A Auto PFC, etc.) to submit to MassDevelopment for funding opportunities. Once the Town identifies projects for state funding support, a meeting would be scheduled with MassDevelopment to further along discussions and the application process.

Most important goal is to get more foot traffic in the building. Zoning is the biggest obstacle in getting more revenue generated by renting spaces. Looking for help from the Town in supporting the required changes. Question raised if any more work has been done in putting together a presentation for use at the next Town Meeting to help drive resident approval for zoning changes. Is a feasibility/market study required to help put across the notion that zoning changes will allow for other tenants to help generate revenue (e.g., dentist office, driving schools, etc.)? Communicating and marketing are key; but PFC does not have the money. Most communication is through schools, senior citizen center, library. Most programs were geared towards kid programs. Flyers were sent home in backpacks. Town is paying baseline utilities costs for property for the next three years. PFC is responsible for everything above that (i.e., routine maintenance, marketing, communications, and other).

Discussion about past MOBD/MassDevelopment meetings and discussions ensued. PFC was brought up regarding the subject of feasibility/market studies. EDAC could be a liaison with Town and MOBD to provide guidance and data regarding use of the buildings. Craig was in agreement to having a feasibility/market study to help with getting more details on who could be targeted renters, etc. Discussion ensued regarding MOBD/MassDevelopment services and town involvement, how this would tie in with Town Meetings, and various timelines.

Chair asked that EDAC members be kept informed of any progress PFC makes in its programs so that EDAC can help move things along. It was suggested that we get everyone together on a conference call so that we are all on the same page when sitting down with MOBD/MassDevelopment. The next meeting with MassDevelopment would be more of an informational meeting now. We would then expand our priority list. Chair agreed to connect with Andrew and others to keep him informed. Chair suggested that Stephen reach out to TA and get on his calendar June 1st (June 8th optional) mid-morning. We then will have a time/date/purpose. Stephen would then reach out to Christine Madore. **PL** said that he would like to sit in on that meeting. He wanted to be a better board member.

3. Brief Updates from Committee members on Action Items

Discussions pursued on the status of Action Items.

MM: PBA: Mark described his 5/7 meeting with Mark Vasapoli (PBA) and their conversation with the owners of the new marijuana shop (the one going in the empty storefront near the old Dunkin Donut shop). The owners wanted to meet and find out more about EDAC and other things going on in Pepperell. It was suggested that Mark Vasapoli be invited to the next EDAC meeting and be included on the June meeting agenda.

JM: Twin River Hydro: Joyce reported that she had received agreement from TRH to paint a mural on the front side of the building. TRH is reviewing also if a mural could be painted on the left side of the building (coming from the downtown area which has a cat walk). A funding mechanism for materials (e.g., paint, etc.) and whatever else may be needed to make this all happen needs to be thought through and initiated.

PL: Phil attended the recent Ag Board meeting. Representatives from MDAR (Mass Dept of Agriculture) attended and made known that there was funding available for non-profits that could be applied for food hub and commercial kitchen endeavors which the AG board members are pursuing. They are potentially pursuing that and other funding through the Grange as a non-profit which has national funding. One last quick item not related to that but through the Federal government there is funding for farmers for Pepperell for Covid-related excess produce.

ST: 1A Auto/TRH property Stephen explained that he plans to call John MacDonald over the next week.

KK: . The Dog Park is moving forward. Kelli reported doing some research on themes and getting more draw and getting help on that so that we can have more activities in the Town. Trying to get volunteers is a big thing especially right now with the virus.

4. 2020 EDAC Meeting Schedule

June 18 – (5:30-6:30 PM)

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 15

November 19

December 17

7. Adjournment

Motion was received and approved to adjourn at 6:31 PM.