



**Town of Walpole**  
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Office of Community & Economic Development**

**JAMES A. JOHNSON**  
*Town Administrator*

**Patrick Deschenes**  
*Community & Economic  
Development Director*

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**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**7/20/21**

**Present:** Marc Romeo, Meg Kundert, John Shalbey, Ken Fettig, Kevin Spendley, Daniel O'Driscoll, Patrick Deschenes (Director of Community & Economic Development)

**Absent:** Beth Pelick, Brian Connor, Donnell Murphy

Mr. Romeo opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

**BUSINESS:**

1. Local Rapid Recovery Plan Update:

Mr. Deschenes explained he has been working with Sarah Khatib with Destination Downtown, and have been categorizing project items for short term and long term.

Mr. Deschenes stated a focal point of today's update deals with subject matter experts, which is an additional provision with the grant where the Town can apply to receive free counseling from experts on a few different selected projects, adding that three of the projects that would be beneficial to take a more in-depth look at:

1. including technical assistance to retail and downtown businesses (creation of a digital marketplace)
2. zoning and permitting within the business district relating to how to better implement and facilitate growth
3. implement a wayfinding program (create a sense of place & awareness for walking downtown)

Mr. Deschenes expressed that he'd like to concentrate on project #1 out of the 3 proposed subject matter expert projects, and stated that the project should be wrapped up by the fall.

Mr. O'Driscoll and Mr. Romeo mentioned the possibility of developing an App. that could aid in this project, and as well as downtown parking.

Mr. Romeo expressed his concern with the limited parking for commuters taking the train, and parking in the downtown area, and recommended multiple different ways to resolve the parking issues.

Mrs. Kundert, Mr. Fettig and Mr. Shalbey expressed that the parking issue, specifically enforcement is more of an issue to be handled by the Police Dept.

Mr. O'Driscoll voiced the idea of a possible MBTA parking garage to mitigate the parking issues within downtown.

## 2. Shared Streets and Spaces Grant:

Mr. Deschenes updated the Commission on the grant relating to streetscaping as well as aesthetical improvements to the alley way. Mr. Deschenes stated that the whole idea of the grant is to implement the reuse of public spaces and public infrastructure for multi-purpose uses, such as increase in foot-traffic and trying to provide additional options for seating for dining or just generally reusing public spaces in a productive way. Mr. Deschenes stated he had a conversation with the DPW director to provide awareness of the future project. Mr. Deschenes expressed that members of Destination Downtown mentioned that the lighting of the alleyways are an area that needs improvement, which would be structurally beneficial to pedestrians and workers, and therefore funding could go towards improving that area of concern.

## 3. Business Forum- General Discussion:

Mr. Romeo stated that one of the main things that downtown struggles with at the moment is aesthetics, and the possibility of having a redevelopment plan that the business owners could buy into for a redeveloped façade of the buildings to create continuity could be beneficial.

Mr. Deschenes stated that there is a grant for the funding to do façade improvement, however it is currently not running.

Mr. Romeo expressed his idea of a possible tax break from the town if the business owner were to invest the money for a redeveloped façade plan up-front. Mrs. Kundert and Mr. Deschenes stated that a total rebuild of the buildings into larger ones with more space to utilize would be more appealing to the owners for increased revenue and the use of more viable space.

Mr. Fettig and Mr. Romeo spoke on having an event in the fall for local business owners and members of the town municipality to get together, such as a breakfast, etc. or possibly meet monthly as a way to network with other business owners and have any questions they may have answered, or hear potential concerns. Mr. Deschenes stated that he will touch base with Harry B. to follow up.

## 4. Main St. Live Status Update:

Mr. Romeo stated that volunteers are still needed for the event. Mr. Romeo stated that he does not yet have the tips license, however he will be getting it in the near future. Mr. Deschenes stated that relating to the permitting side, he has two applications in for the one day entertainment and the use of town property, and ideally would like to shoot for the 8/3/21, or whenever the next Select board meeting.

Mr. Deschenes also stated that the one day liquor license is still outstanding, however should be all set in the coming future. Mr. Deschenes stated that at least six food ate interested and have most likely secured for the event. Mr. Romeo stated that he may be securing a brewery to do a beer garden during Main Street Live- which would help market the brewery, and also have town purchase their goods.

## 5. Department Updates:

Mr. Deschenes updated the Commission about another event taking place on 10/16 from 12-3 PM on the common called “art on the common” that will be run by Destination Downtown that will have live music

and event space for outdoor art vendors to both show and sell their product, and there is a possibility of having a wine vendor as well. Mr. Romeo asked if there will be a Walpole Day this year, in which Mr. Deschenes stated that he is not aware of one at this time.

**OPEN FORUM:**

**1. MINUTES:**

6/15/21: Mr. Shalbey motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Spendley, the motion carried 6-0-0.

Mr. Shalbey motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Kundert, the motion carried 6-0-0 (Romeo, Fetting, Shalbey, Kundert, O'Driscoll, Spendley)

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted: Amy Messier, Administrative Assistant