

EDC Minutes: 1/12/2021

Present: Marc Romeo, Brian Connor, Kevin Spendley, Ken Fettig, Margaret Kundert, John Shalbey, Donnell Murphy, Beth Pelick, Harry Brousaides

Romeo opened the meeting at 5:00 PM

Business:

- **Update from Director:**

Romeo stated that Clark was not present on the zoom conference, this topic was tabled.

- **Discussion of annual report:**

Romeo stated that this item will be tabled until Clark is able to attend the zoom conference and provide an update. Romeo stated that the letter written to the Select Board regarding the grant that was previously discussed at the EDC meeting on 11/20/20 was not received, and that this item will be taken care of within the coming weeks. Romeo stated that he will get a copy of the annual report for the Commission to look over.

- **Discussion re: Walpole Mall:**

Romeo stated that an auction date has been scheduled. Shalbey explained that from what he has heard from the auction market, that the owner of the Walpole Mall cannot make payment at the moment, and therefore as a formality, the bank had to place it up for auction, and the current owner has the intention of purchasing the property back at the auction. Spendley stated that the auction date has been moved from 1/14/21 to 2/18/21.

Open Forum:

Fettig suggested that the Commission get an update on the Aggie H.S. regarding its development in the long-run. Connor stated that after having a conversation with Mr. Buckley, who is an employee of the Aggie, it was mentioned that there may be some modifications to the size of the land, re: being conscious of preventing the creation of damage to the trails. Connor went on to state that there may be a solar project that will eventually be established on that property. Romeo mentioned that many establishments are putting roofs on their carports in order to lease the roof space out for solar energy, and that this could possibly be looked at for future opportunities in Walpole. Shalbey stated that he has looked into the same idea for some of his businesses and noted that the payback is less than ideal, and that work necessary for the solar panel installation on the roof could possibly result in future roof problems/ structural issues, etc. Shalbey stated that covering the parking lot at the Aggie for solar is ideal since it would prevent the disturbance of the existing forestry and there is dead space that is wide open.

Spendley asked the rest of the Commission if there was a vote to comment on the Moosehill 40B project, in which Romeo stated that comments have not been made by the EDC at this moment, however, he will look into it further regarding making comments on behalf of the EDC. Romeo stated that there is quite a bit of activity taking place at the Union St. & West St. development.

Connor asked questions relating to the occupancy and rates of the AQV condos/ apartments that have recently been constructed in town. Murphy stated that the project on East St. had approx. 10-12 units rented, and the other development near the train station is believed to be 40-50% rented.

Shalbey mentioned that he has a friend that is involved with a private group for struggling businesses, and asked if anyone on the Commission knew of any places specifically. Romeo stated that it would be helpful to create an

outreach platform for businesses relating to seeking help financially. Brousaides stated that Destination Downtown has been created, and explained that the groups plan is to highlight two businesses (retail & restaurant) a week in order to help the local business economy. Connor stated that the dry-cleaning business is extremely below average. Romeo recommended that the Commission look into an outreach plan to help the local businesses, such as a flier. Romeo stated that he'll reach out to Clark to get the ball rolling.

Romeo asked Brousaides if he has sent the letter from the Chamber regarding the grants that the Select Board passed on, in which Brousaides stated that he was waiting on Romeo. Romeo stated that there are two or three more viable dates to apply, and will follow up and get on the Select Board's agenda in the near future.

Minutes: 11/10/20 & 12/8/20: Shalbey motioned to accept both sets of minutes, seconded by Spendley, roll call vote: Romeo, Shalbey, Spendley, Murphy, Fettig, Kundert, Connor, Pelick, Brousaides. The motion carried 9-0-0

Shalbey motioned to adjourn, seconded by Spendley, roll call vote: Romeo-aye; Connor-aye; Spendley-aye; Murphy-aye; Fettig-aye; Kundert-aye; Shalbey-aye; Pelick-aye; Brousaides. The motion carried 9-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 PM.

Accepted 3/9/21