

## EDC Minutes: 3/9/21

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

Also present: Director of Community Development: Patrick Deschenes

Romeo opened the meeting at 5:00 PM

### **Business:**

#### **• Introduction of new Director:**

Romeo introduced Patrick Deschenes to the Commission, Deschenes gave a background of his previous experience, including working for the Town of Norwood as their Asst. Town Planner for approx. 3 yrs. and previous to that, worked for the City of Worcester as their GIS technician. Educationally he attended West Field State and Clark University. Deschenes touched upon the importance of outreach programs and expressed an interest in getting a handle on where the Commission stands today with their concerns and projects of interest and future visions. Murphy stated that the Commission has been through a number of Directors in the recent past, and expressed the need to have someone to act as a liaison between the Town and the local businesses, as well as an outreach to those local businesses in order to facilitate communication of the wants and needs of the community.

#### **• Discussion of 100-day focus areas:**

Deschenes touched upon Main Street Live, Murphy explained that due to COVID the Commission was unable to hold the event, however over the years there has been a great turn out for the event. Romeo stated that during the last EDC meeting, the Commission decided to move forward with a sub-committee to plan Main Street Live for mid-September unless the Commission is told otherwise. Deschenes touched upon the most recent guidelines that have been put in place for outdoor music and entertainment and stated to the Commission that if these guidelines remain in place, it would have to be heavily regulated, however, it could still be feasible. Murphy expressed his concern about the heavy restrictions since the turnout over the past couple of years has been approx. 4,000 people. Deschenes stated that keeping the Health Director in the loop with the sub-committee would be beneficial relating to the regulations in place. Deschenes stated that he will run the event info by the Board of Health and get back to the Commission.

Deschenes explained that Town Administrator Jim Johnson gave him a list of goals relating to the EDC, which included being the main point of contact for helping the EDC with initiatives, grants, post COVID recovery and future projects down the road.

#### **• Discussion re: Regional Pilot Project Program:**

Deschenes explained to the Commission that the Massachusetts Office of Business Development is seeking partnership proposals from municipalities that intend to promote regional recovery from the economic impacts of COVID-19. The goal of the program is for municipalities and organizations to work together to create solutions for recovery in their specific economies. Deschenes further explained that its geared towards an evaluation of municipal and commercial land, and creating inventories for each town as a way to help the town market to potential businesses. Deschenes stated that this would help with post-COVID issues, and also a long term solution to have a better understanding of what land is available, what its zoned as, and a streamlined process. Murphy expressed his interest in the land database, and voiced that he would like to retain as much commercial land possible. Shalbey touched upon expanding uses of certain locations and streamlining the permit process, in which Deschenes stated that the Master-Plan rewrite out allow for possible zoning amendment changes. Romeo emphasized that this is one of the most important thing that the EDC can do, with their primary role being to grow the towns tax-base while maintaining the existing one.

**Open Forum:** Romeo expressed that the start time of the EDC meetings of 5PM on a Tuesday may need to be adjusted in order to allow all of the members to attend the meetings.

**Minutes: 1/12/21:** Murphy motioned to accept the of minutes of 1/12/21, seconded by Fettig, roll call vote: Romeo-aye; Murphy-aye; Fettig-aye; Spendley-aye; Shalbey-aye; Kundert-aye; The motion carried 8-0-0

Shalbey motioned to adjourn, seconded by Connor, roll call vote: The motion carried 9-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM.

Accepted 5/11/21