

**Economic Development Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, June 26, 2019**  
**Town Hall – Room 9**

Attendees: Mike Champoux  
Greg Bendel  
Lilia Maselli  
Carol Boisvert  
Daniel Gibbons  
Nancy Vallee  
Suzanne Sullivan  
Thomas Card  
Valerie Gingrich

Absent: Patrick Giroux  
Robert Oliveri

Began the meeting at 7:05pm.

Agenda item #1: Introductions

Each present member gave a brief personal intro to committee.

Agenda item #4: Election of Offices

Greg Bendel nominated Mike Champoux for Chairman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lilia Maselli and unanimously voted in favor by all attending members.

Mike Champoux nominated Thomas Card for Vice Chairman, Greg Bendel 2<sup>nd</sup> and unanimously voted in favor by all attending members.

Lilia Maselli nominated by Mike Champoux for Recording Secretary, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nancy Valle and unanimously voted in favor by all attending members.

Agenda item #2: Committee Goals, Mission Statement, Short Term Goals, Long Term Goals

Roundtable discussions. Mr. Champoux discussed how the committee came together over the years and acknowledge that there was a need for it in town. Committee should be forward thinking and pro active by making would be businesses aware of what Wilmington has to offer while also recognizing issues to the environment, traffic etc.

Mr. Bendel asked long-term, if we would give a presentation to the Board of Selectmen and if so when. Mr. Champoux agreed we would once we have a presentation put together on what we have discussed. Doing this in the Fall may work.

Mr. Gibbons asked if we should focus on small or large businesses, what our common denominator is. Mr. Champoux's vision is to look at low hanging fruit first to get things done in the short term. We should consider seeing what kind of grants we can get from the State.

Mr. Bendel commented that we should reach out to surrounding communities and see what their ED Committees are doing and what their best practices are. Suggested that we have Rep. Dave Robertson come in as a guest speaker at one of our next meetings to discuss the grants that may be available to us.

Ms. Vallee suggested making an inventory of what we want done and see what we can do from that list.

Ms. Sullivan suggested we look at the Pros and Cons at things we want to change, what is holding us back from those changes. How do we get people to not just drive through Wilmington, but actually stop and frequent business they pass by regularly?

Common responses - We need to focus on what we can offer that surrounding towns don't, what is our specialty? Glaring needs of what we are lacking and how to bring it here, restaurants, hotels etc.

We are in a prime location with routes 93/128/495 around us and most of us leave town for dinner etc.

We have Savers and the Salvation Army on 38, what do people think of our town when they drive by that area?

Why did places like Sonic and Staples leave Wilmington? Tax rate for businesses in Wilmington are high and its expensive for them to run here. Ms. Gingrich said that Sonic left due to the business not doing well due to management issues. Permits are in place for a car wash at that location.

It was suggested that sending a questionnaire to local businesses to see what their feedback would be on certain questions.

Ms. Gingrich added that vacancies in town (Walgreens, Rite Aid) they still have active leases and are paying on those leases. The property is making the owners money so they are in no rush to break the lease. Rite Aid would break the lease if the right thing came along.

The Chili's location, which will be a Casablanca Mexican restaurant, is making progress towards opening soon.

Ms. Vallee suggested it would be great to have a database that is accessible to the public that lists all of the commercial property vacancies in town, listing the sq. footage, etc. as it would be a great marketing tool.

Mr. Gibbons mentioned that landowners are in control of the empty space in town. Shriners has a Franchise Expo once a year and that may be a good place for us to setup a booth to promote our town.

We can do something at the Welcome to Wilmington event in September.

Some suggestions:

- Get experienced based businesses in town

- Put benches along 38 in front of Market Basket to make it more welcoming

- Beautification along main roads – Funds would have to come from tax payers, state grants or ask local businesses to donate

- Tap Room & Craft Breweries would be a good business in town. Would attract the younger crowd – Fun Fact: Wilmington is know for growing hops!

- Need to create an environment where business and people would want to come here.

Long/Short Term Goals:

- Create an get active a database that is available to the public showing vacancies with locations, sq. footage, property owners, rent, zoning, preferred use, etc.

- Get list of vacancies in town. The committee will make notes on vacancies as they see them when traveling around town and bring to table at next meeting. Ms. Vallee offered to build and maintain the

database on those vacancies

Town Manager Hull, who was in attendance, recommended that the Assessor's office may be a resource in getting information on vacancies.

Mr. Champoux reached out to Sec. Keneally and invited him to speak at one of our meetings about State aid and resources that may be available to us

We should reach out to select business that may benefit our town (ie Whole Foods, Trader Joe's) and see if they have considered Wilmington as a location. We can share data with them as well as get feedback on if they have considered us but didn't want to – why?

Put together a marketing campaign. We will put together an Article at the next meeting that we can present to BoS to get some funding for the marketing campaign.

We can put together a survey and get in in with the Water or Tax Bills or send out a Survey Monkey. Can also set up at the Farmers Market.

Ms. Gingrich will give us a rundown of what is going on in town at next meeting.

Committee agreed to take July off and meeting next on Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at 7pm, Town Hall, Room 9.

No one from the public was there, so no public comments.

Mr. Bendel motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Champoux acknowledged, Mrs. Maselli 2<sup>nd</sup> and all approved.