

Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 25, 2019
Town Hall – Room 9

Attendees: Mike Champoux
Greg Bendel
Carol Boisvert
Nancy Vallee
Suzanne Sullivan
Valerie Gingrich
Patrick Giroux
Robert Oliveri

Mike Champoux called meeting to order at 7:02pm

Approval of Minutes from 8/28

Two corrections were proposed by V. Gingrich and G. Bendel motioned to approve as amended, R. Oliveri seconded, all voted in favor.

Final Review of Draft WEDC Description Document

M. Champoux revised the draft and all agreed it accurately reflected the past conversation. S. Sullivan motioned to approve, P. Giroux seconded, all voted in favor. M. Champoux will send the finalized document to the Town Manager's office for the Board of Selectmen's packet for an upcoming meeting.

Vacant Space Database

N. Vallee updated the Committee on the database and explained that the database can be used to direct potential businesses to property owners and leasing companies. M. Champoux asked the Committee how the database will stay updated. The Committee discussed frequency of review and how the database could be used to communicate. P. Giroux commented that the larger leasing agencies often have marketing brochure and those could be helpful to the Committee. C. Boisvert suggested making calls to the companies. Letters were discussed. The Committee discussed the database as an internal list that can be helpful when businesses reach out. N. Vallee suggested she call the property owners on the list that are Chamber of Commerce members to see how the property owners might be interested in working with the Committee. P. Giroux suggested also asking about business community concerns that we should know about. C. Boisvert suggested asking some of the property owners if they would attend a future meeting to discuss. P. Giroux suggested starting with the local land owners. N. Vallee will reach out to Northeastern Development, Lucci Realty, and Howland Development.

P. Giroux suggested uploading the database to Google Docs so that it could be accessed by the Committee and updated as spaces are leased and become available.

Review of Draft Letter to SRS Real Estate

M. Champoux complimented P. Giroux on a well drafted letter and informed the Committee that after the last meeting the local press published that the Committee was focused on the Walgreens and a result was the broker contacted the Committee. M. Champoux and V. Gingrich spoke with him on the phone and he explained that they target dollar stores, medical uses, and fitness centers, not necessarily smaller retail tenants. M. Champoux asked the Committee if it makes sense to proceed with a letter considering the phone conversation. P. Giroux explained that typically there is a team that works on the same properties, so the letter could be sent to the lead person. M. Champoux asked P. Giroux to read the draft.

The Committee discussed adding the Town website to the letter and M. Champoux suggested using Town letterhead if possible. P. Giroux will edit the letter. V. Gingrich suggested creating letterhead for the Committee. The Committee agreed and V. Gingrich stated that she could draft the letterhead. The Committee agreed to send out letters prior to the next meeting. P. Giroux asked if there should be a few targeted or a mass mailing. The Committee discussed focusing on retail uses: the Rite Aid, Walgreens, 281 Main Street, Market Basket (previous Fashion Bug) and Sir Speedy at 609 Main. P. Giroux suggested contacting DSM Real Estate, the real estate arm of Market Basket to see if they would be willing to come to a meeting.

WEDC Website

M. Champoux gave an overview of the webpage. M. Champoux and V. Gingrich discussed a system for posting the agendas on the website. N. Vallee suggested getting rid of "the" in "Contact the Economic Development Committee". G. Bendel suggested posting the Main Street Market Study on the page. N. Vallee suggested looking at Burlington's webpage for ideas. The guide for businesses could be added to the page. The Committee discussed adding some stats and facts as well. V. Gingrich said she would add some information for the Committee's review. P. Giroux suggested graphics and maps.

M. Champoux suggested that the Committee look at agenda items #7 and #8 for the next meeting.

G. Bendel suggested a presence at the Welcome to Wilmington event on October 21st at the Library, or if not this time at a future event.

A survey of the community was discussed. C. Boisvert volunteered to start a survey.

The Committee discussed whether to put out the question from the Economic Development Committee, "why Wilmington?" through the local press. P. Giroux volunteered to create a Google form to share to local outlets. M. Champoux and P. Giroux will coordinate on the effort.

M. Champoux informed the Committee that he did a quick introduction to the Committee on WCTV.

Form Based Code

S. Sullivan gave an overview of form based code for zoning, which is based on a vision. She explained that Amherst was developed through form based zoning. She also stated that there are hybrids of conventional and form based zoning. A vision is developed through community input for an area and zoning is created to implement the vision. North Wilmington was used as an example of where a vision is needed. M. Champoux suggested exploring the topic at a future meeting.

N. Vallee suggested bringing someone in to give the Committee more information about how the tax rate works and traffic, two topics that are often heard. G. Bendel stated that the Town's Assessor gives a great talk on the tax rate and how it is shifted to the maximum to the businesses in Town. The Committee agreed to invite Karen to a meeting.

Public Comment

Diane Allan, Wilmington resident, suggested that letters going out should be sent to specific people and should be followed up with a call. She also commented on the state of the MBTA property along Main Street. She also commented on the strip of retail on the other side. She suggested writing a letter to properties to ask them if they have plans to beautify their property. She asked that the Committee take on perking up businesses as well as bringing in new businesses. She stated that this Committee is long overdue and she commends the work being done.

Bill Nolan, Wilmington resident, commented that having access to Rt. 93 is huge. He also commented that curb appeal is important. He applauded the effort and encouraged the Committee for the long term.

Next meeting 10/30 7pm room 9

Motion to adjourn made by P. Giroux and second by G. Bendel and approved by all
8:58pm

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Gingrich, Committee Member