

Economic DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING – May 11, 2021, Called to order at 6:03pm VIA ZOOM

Attendees: Mike Champoux
Valerie Gingrich
Nancy Vallee
Paul Tivnan
Lilia Maselli
Carol Boisvert – joined at 6:38pm
Patrick Giroux
Suzanne Sullivan
Robert Olivieri
Greg Bendel
Miriam Nelson

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1. **Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Roll Call** – All present except Carol Boisvert
3. **Approval of minutes** from 4/14/21 – Minor corrections noted and an addition by Carol. Approved as amended Motion by Greg 2nd by Paul. No further discussion and approved by all on Committee.
4. **Report from Planning Office** – Valerie. Some of the businesses has confirmed that EJs is moving Next to the spin studio on main street. The spin studio will have a juice bar. The Textron property has submitted site plan review for 2 projects to refurbish building 9 to keep and then to demolish buildings and propose a large warehouse, as expected. Will be on the June 1st agenda. We will review those. They didn't submit a full traffic study so that will be comment number 1. Nancy – Submitted for site plan review for stone company to move into the salvation army store. Mike – Textron warehouse. Where will trucks gain access to the shipping docks? Valerie said she hasn't reviewed in detail but proposing to use an existing access road off Lowell street but also keeping the access from Main. The warehouse is proposed behind the parking lot set back where the existing buildings are. They are proposing some green space and parking. From Lowell street you will see the side of the warehouse building.
5. **Recap of Town Meeting** – Greg spoke to John O'Neil regarding hits to WEDC page after Town Meeting and there were 112 new visitors to the WEDC page – a 21% spike in traffic since April. Mike, the articles relating to allowing restaurants to brew their own beer passed with flying colors. The recommendation was made from this committee and it passed. Article 60 and 61 did not pass. Greg, congrats to the committee on the brew – it was on the front page of the Lowell Sun the next day. How long does someone have to wait before bringing the article to town meeting again – 2 years if it's the same zoning. Suzanne mentioned that we should do a press release regarding the brew pub passing. The article was amended to add brewers to sell some of their brew to the public for takeout. Valerie said they would require a package store license, of which we do not have any available right now. Zoning takes effect on the day it was enacted but if the attorney general's office does not approve it, it gets denied retroactive date of Town Meeting. Approvals may come around August. Mike suggested waiting on a press release until we know it passes. We could put it on our website with the stipulation that it is pending AG approval. Suzanne will write a few sentences and link the Lowell Sun article with it. Mike would like to send it out to a wider audience. Suzanne will write it up and send it over to Mike. Patrick mentioned BizNow which is a vehicle that puts out real estate blasts every morning. He will investigate how it works. Suzanne said we should work on a press release going forward. Let's think about media outlets we would like to get this too and form a list.

6. **LRRP Consulting Project Status Update** – Nancy we are still in the information gathering stage. We have 64 responses from the survey and the consultant thinks that is a good number. Working with the consultant and giving them information, they have requested. Next stage is a presentation of their findings and what type of projects they recommend we do to enhance the market area. Their portion of the project is due to wrap at the end of August. This will give us suggestions on where to get funding for these suggestions as well.
7. **Adopt an Island/Community Beautification** – We don't have a lot of islands in Wilmington, but some other programs out there are adopting a flower planter/barrel or an area in town, like off the side of a road, etc. You must work with the DPW as you must find out who owns the land. We may even have to work with the State if we chose any areas on RT. 38/62. Some towns charge a fee others are free. That is something that would need to be discussed with the BoS and Town, DPW etc. and get their blessings. You would have to have a volunteer to coordinate it or the DPW would coordinate if they have the bandwidth. Businesses and families can do this, doesn't have to just be businesses. Suzanne has enough info to move forward but needs to know if it should be a committee issue. Carol mentioned bringing a theme to the project and they would paint that theme on different things. Nancy thinks this does go hand in hand with the rapid recovery program. This could be where we start with the project and then go through the town. There are a lot of options and we must look at each one and what role the DPW plays, water, time, etc. Suzanne has lots of information for different ideas. She thinks coordination with Dave Robertson would be a good idea as they are doing some road fixing. We could find out what they are doing. Mike thinks it should spawn from the WEDC and become its own beautification committee. Greg mentioned that we may get pushback from the public on using town money on private property. We had this pushback when it was asked that we take care of Textron field a year ago. We would need to find out who owns what first. It's important that the people who sponsor these beautification areas take care of the flowers, etc. or it will become an eyesore. It would need to be part of the contract with the person who is sponsoring the spot that they take care of it. Greg said the Town does have a town cleanup day. I'd like to see if split up by neighborhoods. Paul mentioned during the cleanup, do we stick with private places or public? Valerie said we stick to public land on town cleanup day. Mike asked where do we go from here? Suzanne, first step would be to see how the town leadership feels about it. The BoS, the Town Manager, the DPW. The objective would be to stay away from the private spaces. Nancy would be happy to meet up with Suzanne to brainstorm.
8. **Promotional Video Production Status** – Nancy has a script for the video. Waiting on some more green before doing the aerial photography and have some other great aerial photography. Nancy would like to have some help with the script from the committee. Photographer does move quickly.
9. **Programs through MOBD we should pursue? Vacant Storefront, etc.?** – Mike did not have a chance to delve into all the links and programs yet. Asked committee if there were any they liked, or should we table it? Nancy, vacant storefront program is interesting, but the Town must contribute some money to the project as well. The building at 52 Main Street is a good opportunity to beautify that are. Former Spada Dance Studio. Mike encourages the Committee to look at all the links and we will discuss at next meeting to see if any of the programs will work for Wilmington.
10. **Next Meeting – Reorganization of Committee Leadership. Process to follow.** – How should we do this. If anyone wants to step up to a position or not want to do a position, you can throw that

out. Lil mentioned she will not take the secretary role and Mike will not ask or accept to be Chair. Greg thanked Mike for helping get this committee together and for his efforts as Chair over the last 2 years. The first agenda for the next meeting will be the reorganization of the Committee Leadership. Committee agreed it should be at the end of the meeting instead. All agreed so it will be the last agenda meeting. Nancy does think the Town should have an economic development person. Lots of other towns have this position. Mike said we should put together a job description pay scale etc. Nancy mentioned it would have to be put into the budget. BoS would have to embrace it and the Town Manager will have to put into his budget for FY22. Greg said the Town Manager will come to BoS in November to make a recommendation to the budget so that is the time to get to the BOS/Town Manager. Suzanne will put something together for the job description as she has already done research on it. Wilmington is one of the only towns that does not have one. Greg mentioned that maybe adding in a Grant Writer as that may be more beneficial. Perhaps there is a position we can craft that will do both.

- 11. New Business / Agenda Items for next meeting** – Greg mentioned as this committee was so successful in submitting the bylaw for the brew pub, that we should consider suggesting another by law. If this could be a goal that we could submit – change, tweaked, etc.
- 12. Public Comments** – None.
- 13. Next Meeting Date: June 15, 2021 at 6pm**

Meeting motioned to be adjourned at 7:40pm by Carol and Nancy.