

**Economic DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING – June 15, 2021, Called to order at 6:03pm**

Attendees: Mike Champoux  
Valerie Gingrich  
  
Nancy Vallee  
Lilia Maselli – joined at 6:10pm  
  
Carol Boisvert  
  
Robert Olivieri  
  
Miriam Nelson  
  
Greg Maynard  
  
Suzanne Sullivan – joined at 6:30pm

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1. **Pledge of Allegiance**
  2. **Roll Call** – All present except Pat Giroux. Lilia Maselli joined late @ 6:10pm and Suzanne Sullivan who joined @ 6:30pm
  3. **Approval of minutes** from 5/11/21 – approved.
  4. **Introduction to Greg Maynard – Greg introduced himself and then the committee went around the table to introduce themselves.**
  5. **Mike thanked former committee members Paul Tivnan and Greg Bendel. He also read a letter from Mr. Bendel thanking everyone.**
  
  6. **Rapid Recovery Response Plan** – Kevin Price from Berry Dunn, Phase 1 Summary Presentation. Program Website LRRP.com. We will post the presentation within notes. Discussion: Carol mentioned that there are many places that are locked up/receiving rent and not sure if we have the impact to improve that area. Mike and Nancy both concurred that beautifying that area with landscape, etc. would be great. Not sure how to do it but make better curb appeal. Nancy mentioned looking at sign regulations and educating businesses on this so they can hang awnings or signage. Mike mentioned what we could do to incentivize business owners to clean up their property. Lil said that the first thing she sees before entering buildings is the overgrown weeds etc. Maybe we reach out to the property owners and tell them what we are doing and see how we can work with them. Kevin said that they do have programs out there that help businesses with financing for upkeep etc.
- Nancy asked what we could do about open store fronts. Kevin said that we should put that at the top of the project list and see what resources and strategies are available to work with the current owners. Nancy – where do we go to find out who is interested in opening a business in Wilmington? How do we find those people and reach out to them? Mike asked what people do when they figure out the area they want to set up a business. Val said

there aren't any rules around this, but they usually start with a realtor and then work to see what they need for permits etc. Nancy said you can go on LoopNet and start there. Mike said maybe we work with local real estate agents. Carol said that we want a brew pub, maybe we do a marketing strategy to those businesses to see if they want to come here. Miriam asked if we knew who owned these large businesses. Nancy said we do, and she touches base with them regularly. Some owners are very specific about what tenants want to lease to. Suzanne mentioned that maybe we look at some lower hanging fruit first. Wondering if there is something, we can go to Walgreens etc. to incentivize them to lease the space. Some towns fine businesses if they are vacant over a certain period. Val wasn't familiar with this and Suzanne said she will investigate it. Kevin only knows of 2 cities that do this right now and that is NY and San Fran. Nancy – if we know a space is empty the chamber tries to promote that. Are there other ways to promote this? How do we constantly communicate this? Suzanne asked, do we have provisions in our bylaws that allows for low interest loans? In the in-habitant bylaws? Suzanne will investigate. Val – the sign regulations are confusing not only to business owners but also to her. It's not straightforward. There should be pictures and diagrams. Val thinks it's a great opportunity to do something there. Carol mentioned that we don't really have an identity like some other towns. Suzanne said we must build the character, find the vision and go from there. Miriam said I noticed we got an F for benches and trees on the street. Is there anything we can do? Val mentioned that we will start seeing a lot more trees in new developments as it will be a requirement. There will be improvements from Rte. 62 to Woburn, sidewalks, bike paths, etc. by 2025-2026. Val is in touch with the state on this to get it done in that time frame.

7. **Planning Office Update** – Valerie – EJ's are on their way to getting established in their new location next to spin studio. Tracelink 200 Ballardvale is relocated from N Reading to Wilmington. Some interest in the Rite Aid, a daycare facility, nationwide chain, did not mention which one it was. With what they want to do she is worried they won't follow up as they want to do a large outdoor playground. It is complicated but there is interest. Today she spoke with Stephan from the Lowell Sun who was asking for business activity in town. She mentioned the work we are doing with Kevin, businesses who have closed and those who have relocated. Spoke of the work WEDC is doing. Nancy said the owner of 52 Main Street is deciding what she is going to do going forward. She put her in touch with realtors and gave her info to see if she wants to sell or rent. She has interest in someone putting in an ice cream shop. Either way there is activity.
8. **Promotional Video Production Status** – community video is in the works. Miriam and Nancy met last week to do the scripting of the video. Need pictures of the Halloween parade and easter egg hunt. Should be done soon. Miriam mentioned that she would like to see more of a social media presence.

9. **Draft Press Release on Brew Pub** – Mike read the draft out loud. Minor edits.
10. **Reorganization of Committee Leadership** –  
Chairman – Mike Champoux  
Vice Chairman – Nancy Vallee  
Secretary – Miriam Nelson
11. **New Business / Agenda Items for next meeting** – Val, looking forward to hearing what our consultants come back with and LRRP project will be on agenda for the next few meetings. Beautification: Suzanne said let's wait until the consultants come back before we dive into this. Let's push out another agenda. Mike would like to see the Town hire an Economic Development Manager. Not sure how to make that happen. BoS would have to spearhead and ask the Town Manager to include it in his budget for the next year. We would need to present this to the BoS. Will add to agenda. Add stimulus money the Town received to the agenda. Food trucks and pop up shops. Val thinks Shelli should be brought in for this discussion.
12. **Public Comments** – None.
13. **Next Meeting Date: July 14, 6pm in person/ Town Hall.**

**Meeting motioned to be adjourned at 8:05pm by Suzanne and Rob.**

**Respectfully submitted by Miriam Nelson, Recording Secretary.**

*Miriam Nelson* 7/15/21